

# The Psychological Armor of Urban Adolescents: Exploring the Influence of Critical Consciousness and Racial Identity on Career Adaptability

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Running head: PSYCHOLOGICAL ARMOR

# BOSTON COLLEGE

## Lynch School of Education

Department of  
Counseling, Developmental, and Educational Psychology

Counseling Psychology

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ARMOR OF URBAN ADOLESCENTS:  
EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS  
AND RACIAL IDENTITY ON CAREER ADAPTABILITY

Dissertation  
by

OLIVIA M. PHAN

submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

August 2010

# PSYCHOLOGICAL ARMOR

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### Abstract

The Psychological Armor of Urban Adolescents: Exploring the Influence  
of Critical Consciousness and Racial Identity on Career Adaptability

by

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Dissertation Chair: David L. Blustein, Ph.D.

Deficit-oriented research has ignored the strengths of urban adolescents of color, perpetuating interpretations that they are deviant and pathological (Spencer et al., 2006). Generally unacknowledged by problem-focused perspectives is how youths of color grapple with vulnerability to negative socialization messages, prejudice and discrimination, thus they possess competencies that warrant attention (Blustein et al., 2010; Franklin, 2004; Nicolas et al., 2008; Spencer et al., 2006). The purpose of this study is to examine psychosocial influences that promote career adaptability in a sample of 84 urban adolescents of color. Exploratory questions about the contributions of critical consciousness and racial identity to career outcome expectations and subjective well-being were investigated. The results of the regression analyses offer support for considering selected racial identity schemas (Helms, 1995b) as integral parts of counseling interventions to promote career adaptability. Internalization was significantly associated with both outcome variables. Additionally, decreased levels of Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance were found to be related to higher levels of satisfaction with school and work. Implications for programming and policy include recognizing and strengthening abilities of high school students of color to value their racial identity in the vocational process. These findings enhance the understanding of urban adolescents' psychological armor against social injustice and add to the career development literature by counteracting the negative portrayal of this group.

### **Acknowledgments**

My achievements would not have been possible without my loving parents. Thank you, Ba Má, for my privileged upbringing, cultural values, ambition, and the drive to work hard.

I have been so fortunate to have been raised also by my grandparents, who taught me that we all have to live up to standards – whether they are expected of us or we set them ourselves. To Ông Bà Ngoại and Ông Bà Nội, I strive to honor family with the conviction that you have modeled.

I am indebted to my mentors at Boston College. Dr. Elizabeth Sparks, you have been a steady source of encouragement since I started the M.A. program at BC. You shaped the social justice agenda in my personal and professional development. Dr. David Blustein, opportunities in your Transitions to Adulthood project guided me to this completed study. I am grateful for the generous time and advising that you have devoted to this research. Additionally, Dr. Jacqueline Lerner, I appreciate your enthusiasm as a reader which has helped me to regroup and focus with confidence.

For energizing me throughout the dissertation process, I owe Dr. Deirdre Brogan and Dr. Michelle Melton special credit. Your validation, cheers, and brilliance have been incredible, and I deeply treasure our friendship.

Thank you to my sister Priscilla, my brother Timothy, my wonderful friends and family including teammates in the Crazy 8's, South Cove Stat Dragons, BC Office for Institutional Diversity, World Effin' Champions, Kids Who Hit Good, Y5, Tennis Academy at Harvard, Tennis NorthEast a.k.a. David Sloman, Pitchslap, Girard Vet Animals, Bella Ladies, and BC cohort for the perspiration and inspiration.

Last but not least, I would like to express profound gratitude to my partner Ian Hayden. You are always bringing out the best in me, and you are a major force behind this PhD. I look forward to acknowledging your endless support, warmth, humor, and understanding again and again as our journey continues!

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Urban high school youths contend with pervasive inequities in obtaining access to the full array of career development “building blocks” (Blustein, Juntunen, & Worthington, 2000; National Education Association, 2001). Replete with accounts of their struggles and negative environmental forces, the social sciences literature has focused on the overwhelming obstacles that they face (Marsella, 1998; Vera et al., 2008). Much of this research has described the cultural, economic, and social realities yet has ignored adolescents’ strengths in resisting the racism, prejudice, and discrimination that frame their educational and career development contexts (McAdoo, 1992; Obgu, 1985; Spencer et al., 2006). Without considering the assets that they use in such contexts, the dominant societal message – that their typical existence is inherently dysfunctional and that they are passive recipients of negativity – prevails (Nicolas et al., 2008). One of the major challenges that psychologists and educators encounter is in understanding the psychological strengths of high school students, and in particular, poor and working-class youths of color. By identifying the capacity to recognize sociopolitical barriers and to overcome internalized racism (i.e., critical consciousness and racial identity attitudes) as predictors of career adaptability, this study can inform counseling and educational interventions to enhance urban adolescents’ focus on their futures (Kenny, Blustein, Haase, Jackson, & Perry, 2003; Blustein, 2006).

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) will guide the rationale to explore sociocultural influences in career development (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Likewise, career construction theory, which asserts that development is driven by adaptation to the environment, will be used as a lens to understand how individuals negotiate their work-based developmental tasks, as

measured by the proposed dependent variables (Savickas, 1997, 2005). I have selected two dimensions of career adaptability that have particular relevance to the lives of urban high school students: career outcome expectations and subjective well-being. In this study, critical consciousness (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) and racial identity (Helms, 1995b; Helms & Piper, 1994) are used as potential predictors of career adaptability. I will explore two questions designed to identify the predictors of career outcome expectations and subjective well-being for adolescents of color: (1) Do critical consciousness and racial identity attitudes explain significant variation in career adaptability? (2) To what extent do levels of critical consciousness and racial identity statuses significantly account for career adaptability?

### **Theoretical Perspectives of Career Adaptability**

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) provides an overarching framework for this study. SCCT research with racially diverse urban youths has examined how social and systemic factors shape career self-efficacy and outcome expectations, which in turn are hypothesized to determine career interests, goals, and behavior (e.g., Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, & Gallagher, 2003). The basic tenets of SCCT suggest that the way in which individuals perceive the resources and barriers of the opportunity structure affects their career development. Adolescents' successes are partially determined by opportunities, limitations, and expectations imposed by society that interact with the heightened self-consciousness and greater cognitive awareness of this developmental period (Spencer et al., 2006). In this study, I focus on two specific attitudinal constructs – critical consciousness and

racial identity – as exemplars of individual psychological strengths, which are likely to predict variability of career adaptability measures. Although I will not be directly testing SCCT propositions, the SCCT (Lent et al., 2002) and career construction (Savickas, 2005) perspectives will be used to conceptualize how awareness of sociopolitical inequities and racial self-concept influence the two relevant career adaptability dimensions of career outcome expectations and subjective well-being.

Savickas (1997) defines career adaptability as “...the readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions” (p. 254). Career adaptability can be a sign of thriving in adolescence, directly linking career development to positive youth development (Hirschi, 2009). According to career construction theory, individuals construct career choices that express self-concepts and substantiate goals in their social realities (Savickas, 2005). Thus, outcome expectations, from Social cognitive career theory, represent imagined consequences of particular courses of action and serve as a subjective construction of career adaptability (Lent et al., 2002). Career outcome expectations are defined as an individual’s beliefs about probable outcomes of career decisions and behaviors (Bandura, 1989). Kenny and colleagues (2006) have found that despite the presence of social, racial, and economic barriers for a multi-ethnic sample of high school students, greater levels of positive career outcome expectations are educationally adaptive by increasing school engagement over the course of freshman year.

In the emerging research on subjective well-being and related adaptive processes, Lent and Brown have also used SCCT to better understand satisfaction in educational and work

pursuits (Lent & Brown, 2006, 2008; Lent et al., 2005). Recent findings have suggested that social cognitive factors may jointly function as predictors of well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Judge & Ilies, 2002). Helms and Piper (1994) have noted the need for environmental adaptation in the world of work, as particular organizational climates attract and engage people of similar persuasions, but punish and discard those who differ. People's attitudes toward group differences, especially class and racial differences, may be useful in explaining levels of expressed adaptation to, or satisfaction with, the school/work environment. This domain-specific well-being can be measured by increased or deflated feelings about academic and working conditions. The Satisfaction with Career and Academic Preferences questionnaire (SATCAP; DeMania, 1999) is a measure of subjective well-being that fits educational satisfaction and work satisfaction under one conceptual umbrella. When considered collectively, the constructs used in this study represent an exploration of adaptive psychological indices that have the potential to promote positive career development for youths.

### **Intersections of Critical Consciousness and Racial Identity in Career Development**

Explaining deviations in academic performance and career progress in comparison to white middle-class populations implies that poor and working-class adolescents of color are abnormal or pathological (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Helms & Piper, 1994). Although society expects them to conform to White ideals, they lack adequate and equivalent opportunities (Helms, 2003). The normative processes of development are exacerbated by the influences of larger historical processes such as racial subordination and discrimination (Spencer et al., 2006). Considering the thriving that exists in oppressive contexts, theory-building research is needed to

balance the deficit-rife literature with psychological strengths and competencies. Critical consciousness and racial identity have been conceptualized as assets that provide youths of color with the skills and resources to recognize discriminatory experiences and value themselves, counteracting the negative societal messages that they receive and allowing them to cope with educational and career barriers (Blustein, 2006; Nicolas et al., 2008).

Hartung and Blustein (2002) have called attention to the role of social context and opportunity structures in career development and counseling. They revisited Frank Parsons's vision and traced vocational psychology's foundational roots in social justice and political advocacy for poor and marginalized groups. Viewing career development as a socially-situated process, Hartung and Blustein asserted that research and practice must deal with the realities of unequal distribution of educational and economic resources. Hartung and Blustein referred to the Boston High Schools' Tools for Tomorrow intervention as one such socially-situated approach. This school-based psychoeducational program sought to empower inner-city students with the skills and knowledge to negotiate a changing occupational landscape. Although this intervention was not currently active at the time of this study's data collection, the Tools for Tomorrow agenda has inspired the critical move from social justice discourse to action, renewing career counseling efforts to take an explicit stance on the need for integrative and preventive work at the high school level.

Blustein (2006) has urged that the needs of all working individuals, not only those with choice and privilege, deserve a more equitable emphasis. The schools and neighborhoods that these inner-city adolescents attend are constrained by different types of societal oppression that go largely unrecognized by power hierarchies (Fine, Burns, Payne, & Torre, 2004; Ladson-

Billings, 1995; Solorzano & Bernal, 2001; Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002). When adolescents question and reflect about their place within the social order and reject group-based dominance ideologies, they exercise critical consciousness. Making connections between unequal distribution of resources and one's mobility in the work world is an important task in the navigation of identity issues (Noonan, Hall, & Blustein, 2007). Higher levels of critical consciousness in urban adolescents has been associated with more commitment to their future careers, work role salience, and greater clarity of vocational identity (Diemer et al., 2006; Diemer & Blustein, 2006). Raising awareness of an unjust opportunity structure can prevent unconscious socialization (Houser & Overton, 2001) and prepare students to challenge the status quo in the educational and occupational arenas.

On top of the general identity issues of this developmental period (Erikson, 1963), adolescents of color are additionally burdened with obstacles such as historical practices of racial prejudice (Carter & Cook, 1992), constrained economic resources (Smith, 1983), limited career information and opportunities (Cheatham, 1990; Constantine, Erickson, Banks, & Timberlake, 1998), and discrimination in job hiring and promotion when they enter the world of work (Thomas & Alderfer, 1989). In spite of these adversities, many youths have combated these psychologically draining effects and displayed competence (Spencer et al., 2003): "As a function of their net vulnerability and stress levels experienced, *the specific and patterned strategies that youth of color employ to cope with life experiences afford the basis for the formation of identity*" (Spencer et al., 2006, p.634). Yet when deficient-oriented research denies acknowledgement of their sense of agency, success, and inferred accomplishments, the interpretational liberties that

adolescents of color are deviant, pathological, problem burdened, and impoverished are perpetuated (Spencer et al., 2006).

Helms and Piper (1994) have encouraged the use of racial identity theory to explain aspects of vocational development. They proposed that the vocational content or outcomes may not be related to racial identity per se, but the associated process will have a significant relationship with racial identity. Evidence supporting the influence of racial identity attitudes on career-related issues for college students has been documented by many researchers (e.g., Carter & Constantine, 2000; Gainor & Lent, 1998; Jackson & Neville, 1998). Regarding adolescents, Perry (2008) found that vocational exploration and an internalized racial identity affirming group membership are related to the school engagement of urban youths of color. More research is needed to examine the developmental importance of racial identity on the career adaptability of adolescents.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Studies have indicated that the academic achievement and graduation rate of students in urban schools is lower than that of students in many other schools (Eisner, 2001; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2001; Swanson, 2009). Compared with suburban youth in the literature, inner-city adolescents are less likely to perceive a sense of belonging, less likely to receive a post-secondary degree, more likely to drop out of high school, and more likely to experience post-high school unemployment (Anderman, 2002; Loveless, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000). These students reported being victimized and perceiving their schools as unsafe more than students in suburban schools

(Anderman & Kimweli, 1997). They are also more likely to live in neighborhoods with fewer employment opportunities, higher crime rates, and lower levels of social capital (Wilson, 1987).

The multiple stresses of urban life are known to increase susceptibility to behavioral problems, negative physical health, and mental illness for young people (Black & Krishnakumar, 1998). The high costs of children living in urban poverty include greater likelihood of experiencing teenage birth, fewer years of school completion than children from more affluent families, poorer health, and lower levels of emotional well-being (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Seccombe, 2000). Students who drop out of school are likely to become adults who are caught in a cycle of poverty, underemployment, and social despair (Kortering, Hess, & Braziel, 1997). Unfortunately, even urban youths who stay in school are often entering college or the workforce unprepared to succeed and have difficulties attaining a meaningful work life (Wilson, 1996).

In the literature on risk and resilience, Garcia Coll and colleagues (1996) have emphasized the necessity of studying the “unique ecological circumstances” (p.1893) that impact contexts of development. They argue that experiences of discrimination, racism, prejudice, and segregation set youths of color apart from their White peers. Spencer and colleagues (2006) have argued for a contextually sensitive, resilience theorizing, and identity-focused, cultural-ecological way that highlights coping with societal marginalization. How urban adolescents internalize inequitable educational and occupational systems can guide career counselors to “face the delicate task of helping racial and ethnic minority clients to explore their aspirations and to identify possible realistic obstacles in their paths” (Fouad & Bingham, 1995, p. 341). Given the disconcerting consequences of the achievement gap, graduation crisis, and access to resources,



research is needed to better understand how to increase career adaptability. Moreover, the frequent reporting of these negative behaviors and outcomes are typically assumed to define the existence of these youths, obscuring the assets that they use in these grim conditions (Nicolas et al., 2008).

### **Purpose of the Present Study**

As the U.S. achievement gap and graduation crisis is a growing cause for concern (Eisner, 2001; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2001; Swanson, 2009), educators, counselors, and policymakers face the challenge of elevating the school and work success of all youths. The purpose of this study is to improve understanding of the psychological armor that promotes career adaptability in urban adolescents of color. Considering educational and occupational inequity, greater critical consciousness and healthy racial self-concept can help youths of color navigate oppressive systems. Professionals who work with this population often have an unbalanced understanding of their competencies and internal resources. Thus, identifying social cognitive strengths can shift the focus from an overemphasis on the daunting problems to discerning factors that foster healthy development, namely outcome expectations and subjective well-being. Awareness of the nuances of group inequality and racism in the opportunity structures of urban high schools and the world of work can allow these students to form more affirmative, flexible racial and critically conscious identities. The findings of this study can advance counseling and psychosocial preventive approaches with urban adolescents by identifying strengths that enhance career adaptability.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

Erikson's (1963) seminal theories of identity development explained how the period of adolescence, "bridges the stages of childhood when the bodily self and the parental images are given their cultural connotations; and it bridges the stage of young adulthood, when a variety of social roles become available and, in fact, increasingly coercive" (p. 235). Adolescence then serves as a particularly salient point in which the sociocultural context can provide the necessary pressure and support to facilitate adolescents' career development (Marko & Savickas, 1998). First, a discussion of the urban context is presented to situate our understanding of the challenges to this young population's educational and vocational trajectories. Then, recent research on career adaptability variables of outcome expectations and subjective well-being is examined from the SCCT (Lent et al., 2002) and career construction (Savickas, 2005) frameworks. Savickas's (1997) construct of career adaptability will serve as the criterion in which we anchor the readiness to cope with tasks of vocational development, how relevant knowledge of self and situation expands the psychological dimensions of working. Next, to introduce the psychological strengths that influence the career adaptability of urban adolescents of color, I review theories and important findings of sociopolitical and racial identity development. Finally, this chapter concludes with the research questions and hypotheses of this study.

### **Unjust Realities of the Urban Context**

Swanson (2009) found that graduating from an urban high school in the United States amounted to a toss of coin. Over half of the students from the nation's largest cities failed to graduate with a high school diploma in 2008. Swanson's analysis found that the gaps between

Whites and historically disadvantaged minority groups can exceed 25 percentage points nationally; however, for the nation's largest cities, he suggested that graduation rates for these community subgroups of color may fall even lower than what was presented in the report.

Swanson (2009) found that Boston Public Schools – the urban school district from which this current study's sample is drawn – already suffer from freshman loss, losing over half of its students in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Whereas a number of cities throughout the country showed large gains in high school graduation rates, between 1995-2005 the city of Boston saw a 1.7 percentage point decline overall during this time (Swanson). Boston Public Schools' graduation rate is 22 percentage points lower than the metropolitan suburban graduation rate of 83.8 percent. In 2005, this urban-suburban graduation gap increased 5 percentage points over the previous decade (Swanson). Thus, the urban school district where this study's sample is based graduates students appallingly below the neighboring suburban school systems. Because the advantage of a high school diploma corresponds to a 47.9 percent chance increase in employment in Boston, with graduates earning almost double what non-graduates earn (Swanson), the socioeconomic consequences of this student retention and graduation crisis is daunting.

The benefits of finishing high school reduce the likelihood of living in poverty by one-third (Swanson, 2009). In addition to employment outcomes in an increasingly global workforce, graduates also are better positioned to lead successful adult lives in virtually every measurable respect than are non-graduates. Colin Powell, former Secretary of State, National Security Adviser, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, described the economic-empowerment goal to further solutions for underprivileged Americans: "Jobs and education. Economic opportunity and education. You can't have one without the other. Only when you

have kids who are educated and can perform in a modern workplace can you focus on economic opportunity” (National Urban League, 2010, p.S6-S8). A well-educated workforce can improve the quality of life for an individual and the economic or social health of the larger community (Blustein, 2006; Swanson, 2009). As the American public education system continues to struggle with the challenge of significantly improving graduation rates, promoting high school completion can be considered a prerequisite to functioning successfully as an adult, accelerating earnings, and affording more opportunities for career advancement.

### **Unique Challenges Encountered by Urban Adolescents of Color**

Erikson (1959) described how the development of a positive occupational identity is particularly important for establishing an adaptive ego identity. For youths of color, it also involves making sense of the inequitable resources in schools and communities; a lack of accessible career role models; and the existence of systemic and institutional barriers (Kenny et al., 2003; Ladany, Melincoff, Constantine, & Love, 1997). Beginning to understand the ways in which worldviews and expectations are shaped by being a person of color in the United States comes alongside understanding the impact of societal oppression and racism, both explicitly and implicitly (Quintana & Vera, 1999). The process of intense growth and self-discovery during this developmental period can be extremely stressful (Erikson, 1963, 1968). Urban adolescents of color grapple with the additional “growing up” task of overcoming the increased vulnerability to negative socialization messages, prejudice and discrimination (Franklin, 2004; Nicolas et al., 2008; Spencer et al., 2006).

The career development of urban adolescents is seriously affected by the lack of access to networks necessary for educational and social mobility (Yun & Kurlaender, 2004). The school and larger context has the potential to support or fail the extent to which youth develop career adaptability. Students of color may walk into a classroom and be unconsciously or consciously consigned to a status of academic and intellectual inferiority (Cokley, 2006). Educational reform on high-stakes testing is needed as “teaching to the test”, to maintain the reputations of schools, cheats student learning and lowers outcomes among students who do not test well in the present format, particular economically disadvantaged students of color (Dworkin, 2005).

The classroom dynamics may contribute to the manifestations of disengagement and opposition for students of color through practices such as academic tracking, negative expectations, bureaucratized relationships and practices, racial discrimination, and barriers to information (Davidson, 1996). “Ability grouping” practices are defended by school administrators as fair and objective, but there is usually a recognizable racial pattern to how children are assigned, representing the system of advantage operating in the schools (Oakes, 1985). The reality of these social injustices and the socially-situated processes in response to oppression needs to be addressed in urban education, particularly as it impedes career development and subsequent occupational attainment (Hartung & Blustein, 2002).

One study of college students combined the classifications of African American, Native American, Asian American and Hispanic to explain that all “ethnic minority students” were more likely to perceive career-related barriers directly associated with their ethnicity, financial concerns, and childcare concerns that inhibits coping self-efficacy and educational goal attainment (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001). Studies such as the one by Luzzo and McWhirter tend

to use the deficit paradigm, simplistically explaining that racial group membership inherently has problems and blaming students of color for their shortcomings and failures. When ignoring the inequities of American life that cause the achievement gap, the ideology of intellectual and cultural inferiority continues to infect teachers, curriculum development, administrators, school policies and ultimately, students' academic and career progress (Lewis et al., 2008). Particularly in urban education, Anyon (1997) commented that teachers who come from marginalized communities accept and espouse this type of deficit thinking onto their students through setting low expectations, giving low-level assignments, and speaking in ways that are demeaning and demoralizing.

The larger historical and media context are social forces that underlie the inequality in schools as adolescents are exposed to negative socialization messages based on their "not-White" physical appearance (Dworkin, 2005; Helms, 2003). When these urban schools are comprised mainly of students of color, societal racism exacerbates the availability of educational and occupational resources (Constantine et al., 1998). Urban schools are more likely to have low-income students than non-urban schools as well as other severe inequities in school resources, health problems, single-parent households, increased crime rates, increased likelihood of teen pregnancy, and fewer employment opportunities (Black & Krishnakumar, 1998; Kenny, Blustein, Haase, Jackson, & Perry, 2006; Sirin, Diemer, Jackson, Gonsalves, & Howell, 2004; Wilson, 1987). The host of difficulties that come with living in concentrated poverty is profound, and it is essential for research to identify the strengths of young people of color that promote success in school and work. The next section will examine how enhancing career adaptability can offer solutions to empower underprivileged individuals and communities.

**Career Outcome Expectations as Career Adaptability**

SCCT highlights how person and contextual influences such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status “shape the learning opportunities to which particular individuals are exposed, the characteristic reactions (e.g., support, discouragement) they receive for performing different activities, and future outcomes they anticipate” (Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1996).

Outcome expectations, a dependent variable in this current study, are the anticipated consequences of pursuing one’s goals or performing one’s work role (Lent & Brown, 2008). Lent and colleagues (1994) have defined outcome expectations as the extent to which people believe they will be able to satisfy their primary values if they were to pursue particular career paths. As a dimension of career adaptability, this variable plays a part in how the self develops to choose suitable and viable opportunities for an individual to become who she or he wants to be (Savickas, 1997).

Research on outcome expectations for the adolescent population has been conducted to better understand factors that influence decisions about postsecondary plans and the effect upon interests and intentions to pursue various vocational paths (McWhirter, Rasheed, & Crothers, 2000). Higher vocational/educational self-efficacy has been associated with higher outcome expectations for adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Ali, McWhirter, & Chronister, 2005). These researchers suggested that future investigations of career outcome expectations should also examine distal contextual variables that are particularly relevant for adolescents of color who face a multitude of challenges when envisioning potential career paths.

Career outcome expectations are beliefs about the likelihood of actually receiving particular future work outcomes utilizing the skills of the participant (Lent et al., 1994). In a

study of high school sophomores, only short-term gains in outcome expectations were found at the end of a career education class (McWhirter, Rasheed, & Crothers, 2000). Although the scores were significantly higher for those in the career education class during the first quarter, these gains were not maintained. Enrolling in the class for the second quarter did not significantly increase outcome expectations. Therefore, finding factors that can sustain increases in skills relevant to vocational exploration, accessing information about the current job market, and career decision-making is warranted, particularly in the contexts of students of color.

### **Gains in Career Outcome Expectations Despite Disenfranchised Backgrounds.**

Research has implied that some minority youths hold high aspirations for prestigious and desirable occupations, but do not expect to achieve their career dreams, thus investing less in school and career planning (Arbona, 1990; Mikelson, 1990; Yowell, 2002). Those who are channeled into poor schools in the public school system question the value of their education (Mollenkopf, Waters, Holdaway, & Kasinitz, 2005). They may not believe their aspirations are attainable as a result of economic and structural barriers (Smith, 1983). Scanlon and colleagues (2008) analyzed qualitative data and found that urban ninth-graders of color overwhelmingly described “middle-class aspirations” for their post-school life. They remained consistent in seeking professions that require graduate education such as doctors and lawyers. These students recognized that the conventional pathways to these middle-class goals almost always call for a postsecondary education, reflecting the awareness of these credentials’ significance to economic and social achievements in the current day and age (Schoon & Parsons, 2002). Concurrently, some students acknowledged the difficulties of rising from low-socioeconomic status households



and communities to attain these career goals (Scanlon et al., 2008). Given normal cognitive maturational processes, adolescents of color are psychologically constructed to understand disparities, despite White privileging conditions that frequently overlook them (Spencer, 2005).

In this regard, career expectations, rather than aspirations, more closely conceptualizes the limited expectations tied with school and career outcomes (Kenny et al., 2003). Urban students who enter ninth grade with higher levels of career planfulness and positive career outcome expectations may develop increased feelings of valuing and belonging in school over the course of freshman year, suggesting that the construct of career outcomes expectations is educationally adaptive (Kenny et al., 2006). Kenny and Bledsoe (2005) have also found that emotional support from family, teachers, and close friends all contributed significantly to the outcome expectations variable, one of four dimensions of career adaptability. These researchers suggested that further research could identify components beyond emotional support that maximize the effectiveness of enhancing career adaptability in culturally relevant and racially sensitive ways. The development of positive career outcome expectations is an important work preparation task young people from disenfranchised backgrounds, as it ties capabilities and potential payoffs that influence the accessibility of academic and occupational opportunities.

One study of African American ninth graders identified ethnic identity as a potential source of strength on career outcome expectations (Gushue & Whitson, 2006). The researchers found that while career decision self-efficacy and teacher support were positively related to career outcome expectations, no supported relationship between ethnic identity and outcome expectations existed. They speculated that the lack of significance was due to a restricted range of ethnic identity in the sample, as the African American sample came from a high school made

up of 97% students of color. A direct effect of ethnic identity on outcome expectations was also not supported for a sample of Latino/a high school students (Gushue, 2006). In those findings, ethnic identity affected outcome expectations primarily through its impact on self-efficacy.

Gushue acknowledged that though a more mature ethnic identity may help a student cope with discrimination by bolstering self-efficacy, it does not account for the pervasive effects of racism in the access to educational resources and employment.

Ethnic identity, distinct from racial identity, refers to learning or internalizing from ethnic kinship as a means of functioning in customs, skills, and traditions of the requisite ethnic groups (Helms, 2003). While ethnicity focuses on differences in those meanings, values, ways of living, and institutionalized practices, race implicates power and the history of denigration, exploitation, and prejudice established by the social status rankings among racial groups (Markus, 2008).

Racial identity, reviewed later in this chapter, may be more worthy of consideration as a predictor than ethnic identity, as the manner of perceiving and reacting to racial events can have a profound influence on the imagined consequences of particular courses of career choices (Helms, 2003; Lent et al., 2002).

Critical consciousness can also address other types of inequitable distribution of power attributable to social groupings. These adolescents must interact in environments of social dominance and racial stimuli. Therefore, negotiating the societal valuing and the devaluing that happens through critical consciousness and racial identity development is hypothesized to have significant contributions to outcome expectations.

**Subjective Well-being as Career Adaptability**

Subjective well-being is another dimension of career adaptability, identified by the SCCT framework. Scholars have rallied around the counseling psychology mission to emphasize “practices that help people improve their well-being... and increase their ability to live more highly functioning lives” (Society of Counseling Psychology, 2006 as cited by Lent & Brown, 2008). Lent and Brown (2006) proposed that people contribute to their own growth and sense of purpose, make meaning of their lives, organize support systems, and engage in valued activities to move toward personal goals – all in turn, enhancing their subjective well-being. The SCCT approach acknowledges that work satisfaction can have multiple sources and highlights ways individuals may be empowered to regulate their experience of life and work satisfaction (Lent & Brown, 2008).

One study of urban adolescents of color that examines predictors of subjective well-being as three interrelated factors: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Vera et al., 2008). The results reported by Vera et al. suggested that the family context is the most relevant contextual influence on subjective well-being for this sample of adolescents, above and beyond the contributions of individual, school, and peer-related variables. Specifically, it was sense of worth in one’s family that significantly predicted life satisfaction and negative affect. Because the influences of peer and school contexts were irrelevant to their model of subjective well-being, Vera et al. speculated that an examination of context-specific satisfaction would reveal different patterns of findings. Hence, narrowing the research on satisfaction to the educational and work contexts may be an important direction for research to promote the career adaptability of urban adolescents.

Hirschi (2009) assessed Swiss eighth graders' satisfaction with life as an indicator of subjective well-being. The longitudinal panel study showed that higher achievement of career adaptability dimensions significantly predicted increased sense of power and life satisfaction. Development of core components of career choice readiness, career planning, career exploration, and confidence promoted greater well-being for these adolescents. The majority of the research in the subjective well-being field has focused on life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999), whereas this study will focus on the domain of work satisfaction. Because SCCT considers contextual factors as shaping the perceived opportunity structure around career interests and choices, it is possible that certain strengths impacted by supports, resources, and obstacles can account for changes in subjective well-being.

From a career construction lens, Savickas (2002, 2005) has translated his theory to the practice of promoting subjective well-being. Through career construction counseling, people choose, adjust to, and use work as a way to achieve self-completion and make social contributions that matter to self and society (Hartung, 2008). The personal meaning derived from vocational behavior, such as feeling satisfied in work, constitutes significant and fundamental goals for many, affords opportunities, and cultivates a sense of identity (Blustein, 2006). Work is a domain in which people enact social roles, including the demographic variables such as race, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, among others, that impact subjective well-being (Savickas, 2002). The importance of these individual differences supports the developing self-concepts of adolescents, especially as they explore their fit in the world of work (Hartung, 2008). As a dimension of career adaptability, subjective well-being involves

using work as a context for urban adolescents' efforts and satisfaction in cultivating an identity and advancing in society.

### **Work Satisfaction: A Domain of Subjective Well-Being.**

Lent and Brown (2006) described the value in capturing the interplay among multiple social and cognitive sources of individuals' educational and work subjective well-being from a SCCT perspective. Satisfaction in educational and work pursuits (hereafter abbreviated to work satisfaction) is a domain-specific subjective well-being variable that is used to represent the second dimension of career adaptability in this study (Lent & Brown, 2006, 2008; Lent et al., 2005). Integrating Super's (1957) view that individuals form critical decisional attitudes, competencies, and realistic vocational coping behaviors with work satisfaction, this dimension of career adaptability fulfills Savickas's (1997) conceptualization that these individuals make efforts to better implement self-concepts in response to the environment. While the literature on work satisfaction has been a mainstay in industrial-organizational psychology (Fritzsche & Parrish, 2005), the field of counseling psychology can benefit from converging research on career development and subjective well-being to enhance work satisfaction.

In career development research with persons of color, work satisfaction remains a relatively understudied construct (Worthington, Flores, & Navarro, 2005). Holder and Vaux (1998) found that compared to routine stressors, personal and social resources, and locus of control, race-related stressors accounted for more variance in Black professionals' job satisfaction when working in predominantly White employment settings. These negative experiences indicate that it is an opportune time to study work satisfaction for people of color in

the workplace, and particularly, high school students' preparation to enter these work settings. Versions of the work satisfaction model have been examined in relation to adult professionals and to the academic and social satisfaction of college students, and more inquiry in the adolescent population and diverse contexts is needed (Lent et al., 2005).

### **The Need for Critical Consciousness in Urban Education**

Each community is shaped by historical, social, economic, and political conditions, and the same could be said of the schools that serve these communities. Many urban settings present obstacles in which high levels of chronic problems can cause psychological distress and affect coping behaviors (Miller & Townsend, 2005). Luthar and Zigler (1991) suggested that urban adolescents of color experienced unique and ubiquitous set of circumstances that produced more stress than those experienced by white middle-class adolescents. High rates of poverty and economic hardships heighten susceptibility for social and psychological problems (McLoyd, 1998). Experiences of discrimination, racism, prejudice, and multiple forms of segregation (e.g. residential, psychological) plague the traditional contexts of development, including schools and neighborhoods (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Other unrelenting negative urban stressors are external environmental conditions, such as loud noises in the neighborhood; negative interpersonal interaction and surveillance, such as conflicts with teachers and being stopped by police; safety concerns, such as worrying about the well-being of family members; and anticipatory victimization such as taking a longer way to school to avoid trouble (Miller & Townsend, 2005). These realities of injustice call for research on psychosocial remedies and strengths-based work to support positive and proactive meaning-making in school and work.

Noonan, Hall, and Blustein (2007) found in their qualitative study that urban high school students notice stratification in their workplace mirroring stratification in the larger society. In the career development of these adolescents, awareness of the broad influences of privilege, respect, bias, stigma, and power imbalances is invoked in their school-to-work transition. Making connections between unequal distribution of resources and one's mobility in the work world is an important task in the navigation of identity issues. While the existence of social stratification barriers can thwart young people's dreams, the researchers suggested that receiving a balanced message of possibility and useful strategies to deal with the impact has implications for mentoring and educational programming.

High levels of critical consciousness for urban adolescents is characterized by the questioning of and reflecting about one's place within the social order and rejection of group-based dominance ideologies (Diemer et al., 2006; Diemer & Blustein, 2006). Wolk (2003) argued for critical consciousness in the school curriculum, proposing that teachers should instill "the skills and desire to evaluate society and the world. The critique is especially focused on issues of power: Who has it and who is denied it; how it is used and how it is abused" (p.102). Uncovering an identity within a social context that does not provide access to opportunities for all allows individuals to notice the impact of social dominance directly in their own lives and try to make sense of these experiences. Given the likelihood that diverse adolescents will experience disparities in equity and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ability status (to name a few), awareness of these factors can differentially shape the way outcome expectations and subjective well-being are formed.

Brazilian educator-activist Freire (1972, 1990) argued for the sociopolitical and the academic value of critical consciousness, using the term *conscientization*. Freire described how people develop an awareness of the socioeconomic and cultural circumstances that influence their personal behaviors. The ability to think independently and critically is a necessary prerequisite for resisting oppression. This struggle for liberation is relevant in the educational process, as critical consciousness development can help adolescents challenge the gross sociopolitical inequities and strive for a more affirming way of being:

... learning to think critically about accepted ways of thinking and feeling, discerning the hidden interests in underlying assumptions and framing notions (whether these be class-, gender-, race/ethnicity- or sect-based). It means learning to see, in the mundane particulars of ordinary lives, how history works, how received ways of thinking and feeling serve to perpetuate existing structures of inequality. (Hopper, 1999, p. 13)

In the education of urban students of color, critical consciousness is necessary as they face complicated and ongoing challenges posed by racism and oppression (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lynn & Hassan, 1999; Watts et al., 2002). Students who view schools as reproducing social inequality may elect to drop out of school (Fine, 1991). The complex interaction among education and inequality often leads to academic disengagement and failure for those who remain in school (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Fine et al., 2004; Watts et al., 2002). These youths are more likely to internalize their school difficulties as warranted symptoms of their own personal shortcomings if they do not have a perspective of critical consciousness (Fine et al., 2004). Thus, engaging with a premise of Freire's critical pedagogy must be forged "with, not for, the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity" (Freire, 1972, p. 30). Understanding the oppressive aspects of society can lead to more effective resistance strategies to counteract inequitable conditions.



In their critical race framework for transformational resistance, Solorzano and Bernal (2001) acknowledged that educational institutions can operate in contradictory ways: holding the potential to empower but legitimizing the potential to oppress. They named the ideologies of “race- and gender-neutral curriculum,” “objective standardized testing,” “meritocratic tracking systems,” and other “color- and gender-blind educational policies” that continue to marginalize students of color in an urban context. Environmental cues of mundane educational inequality represent a system of advantage operating in the schools (Oakes, 1985). Other forms of institutional discrimination within education have been criticized, such as inequities in school funding, overcrowding, low teacher expectations for students of color, less qualified teachers, and limited access to higher-level courses (Cole-Taylor, 2003). Yet, scholars (Lerner, Lerner et al., 2006; Nicolas et al., 2008; Solorzano & Solorzano, 1995) believe that individuals are not simply acted on by structures; rather there is human agency— the confidence and skills to act on one’s behalf. When students are motivated by a sense of social justice through a strong level of critical consciousness, the possibility for social change can help them navigate the pervasive micro-aggressions and gross inequities.

### **Social Dominance Orientation Research: An Inverse Relationship with Critical Consciousness.**

Social dominance orientation (SDO) is an ideology that runs counter to Freire’s (1972, 1990) notion of critical consciousness. Pratto and colleagues (1994) conceptualized SDO as an individual attitudinal factor expressing “the value that people place on non-egalitarian and hierarchically structured relationships among social groups... [which] expresses general support for the domination of certain socially constructed groups over other socially constructed groups”

(Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p.61). Research on the SDO construct has found generally that individuals who endorse higher levels of social dominance also endorse higher levels of prejudiced attitudes and beliefs toward marginalized groups (Sidanius, Devereux, & Pratto, 1992; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996; Whitley, 1999).

Given Whites' dominant role in defining the political, legal, social, and cultural norms in the United States, Worthington and colleagues (2008) surmised that Whites will have a stronger orientation toward social dominance than people of color. In their study of college students, they found that SDO was moderately correlated with blatant racial issues (e.g. unawareness the pervasive social problem of racial discrimination) and institutional discrimination (e.g. limited awareness of the implications of the institutional forms of racial discrimination and exclusion). Findings indicated that elevated SDO reflects classic conceptions of overt racism. Students' perceptions of campus climate in a predominantly White, Midwestern university were more positive when they denied the existence of privilege within intergroup relations. For people of color, the relevance of diversity issues is presumed to be drastically different, and this study expects that changes in critical thinking levels will account for variability in outcome expectations and subjective well-being.

Adolescent SDO has been studied as a function of the shared social context that contributes to either changes or stability in hierarchy-enhancing or hierarchy-attenuating attitudes (Poteat, Espelage, & Green, 2007). In exploring the intersection among homophobia and social dominance, results of that investigation suggested that adolescents are impressionable, particularly their prejudiced attitudes, and influenced by members of their peer group. With regard to sexism, Houser and Overton (2001) have also argued that adolescents often

unconsciously socialize themselves and their peers to uncritically accept inequalities in relationships between men and women. While Pratto and colleagues (1994) have indicated that SDO attitudes among individuals are relatively stable over time, these findings consider how attitudes are relative to the majority of other group members and that group socialization can change individual attitudes. Along these lines, adolescence is a period in which the developmental trajectory of critical consciousness can be modified, especially with the influence of certain social affiliations.

Critical consciousness has been operationalized by Diemer (2006) as inverted scores on social dominance orientation (SDO) measures. One recent mixed-method study found that critical consciousness reflection in urban adolescents is associated with support from peers, family, and community members (Diemer et al., 2006). That sample of urban adolescents perceived the most support for challenging racism, moderate support for challenging social injustice, and the least support for challenging sexism, as several participants even conflated the word “sexism” with “sexual intercourse”. When participants perceived an “ism” to be a problematic aspect of their sociopolitical environment, they perceived more support to challenge it. So within the urban adolescent population, those who benefit from the status quo – for example, young men through gender inequality – may not view it as inherently negative. These researchers encourage the utilization of peer-based interventions to problematize and challenge inequities.

Diemer and Blustein (2006) have found that critical consciousness is associated with a connection to a vocational future, work role salience, and clarity of vocational identity. Their findings of statistically significant relationships between urban adolescents’ critical

consciousness and progress in career development suggest that this construct serves as an internal resource within an inequitable educational and occupational arena. As a meaningful “piece of the puzzle” (Diemer & Blustein, 2006), I hypothesize that higher levels of critical consciousness will positively influence career adaptability by raising awareness of an unjust opportunity structure and prepare youth to challenge the social forces and dynamics of oppression that constrain career outcome expectations and work-related subjective well-being.

### **Race Matters**

While critical consciousness encompasses forms of subordination based on class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language, and immigration status among others, race and related racial socialization experiences of students of color have a particular significance for identity development. Helms’s (1990b, 1995) people of color racial identity model applies to adolescent-identity development with respect to the interpersonal relations and career development of urban youths of color. Helms’s theory-informed measure is designed to assess the differential impact of racial dynamics on individuals’ psychological development (Helms & Cook, 1999). Differences in racial identity attitudes should be predictive of environmental adaptation and how these adolescents move toward occupational goals are due explicit consideration in the research literature (Helms, 2003).

Robinson and Ward (1991) described the potentially destructive elements of racelessness that erode self-confidence, lower self-esteem, and impair positive identity development for Black girls. They critiqued Fordham and Ogbu’s (1986) “acting white” strategy as short-term and highly problematic, leading to self-alienation and separation physically and psychologically from

the cultural community of origin. Robinson and Ward contended that the process of growing up necessitates a sustained, self-conscious process of seeking to identify and transcend imposed systemic barriers by drawing on one's history and cultural connections. They emphasized the strengths of the self and the community to undertake "resistance for liberation" in such ways as using personal achievements to resist racism and seeing the importance of hard work and communalism as "a personal responsibility, as an intergenerational commitment to family, and as a tie to the larger collective" (Robinson & Ward, 1991, p.94). In the sociopolitical environments of urban adolescents, withstanding the assaults of oppression requires a critical observation of the social world, rejecting ways of being that are disempowering, and engaging in strategies that are self-affirming. The transformation quality identifying and analyzing issues of racial socialization in positive racial identity development can advance children of color towards psychological health and self-determination (Ward, 1996).

Racial identity is a person's sense of self relative to race and racial socialization, as defined by the environments in which they interact (Helms & Cook, 1999). The basic assumption of Helms's (1990a, 1995a, 1995b) racial identity theory is that race or racial categories are social constructions with intra-individual or person-level psychological implications. Racial identity typically develops in response to formal and informal societal structures (e.g., laws, customs, and stereotypes) that deal resources on the basis of ostensible racial-group memberships (Helms, 2003). White racial identity (Helms, 1990a, 1995a) refers to the processes in which White individuals construe and interact with White members as well as out-group members (people of color) individually or collectively. While this study will not measure White racial identity development due to the sample of color, it is important to

recognize that this framework exists with respect to internalized White racial socialization and is intrinsic to ethical psychological research with communities of color (see Helms, Henze, Mascher, & Satiani, 2005). Racism not only disadvantages people of color but privileges Whites, and naming this racial privilege as a protective factor prevents normalizing Whiteness as an implicit standard for all (Spencer, 2005; Spencer et al., 2006).

Different group-level socialization experiences vary according to the extent to which the group is accorded advantaged or disadvantaged status in society (i.e. group oppression or privilege; Helms, 1990a, 1995b). African American racial identity has been traditionally conceptualized as an important psychologically protective set of beliefs that African Americans have developed to buffer against the impact of racial discrimination and stigmatized status (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1998). Recognizing this construct as salient for people of color assumes that individual differences in racial identity attitudes can help account for individual differences in other developmental experiences while acknowledging structural and individual level barriers such as racial discrimination and stigma (Smalls, White, Chavous, & Sellers, 2007).

### **Racial Identity Development and Adolescence.**

Urban adolescents in this study acknowledge membership in groups with visible skin color characteristics and are exposed to socialization messages based on this “not-White” physical appearance. Helms (2003) contends that during adolescence, physical appearance is at the identity-development forefront. In a similar vein, Erikson (1968) observed that adolescents’ experience of pressure to conform to social norms and heightened awareness of others’

perceptions creates a state of internalized tension that is also an opportunity to cope. Unresolved racial identity issues can lead ALANA (African American, Latina/Latino American, Asian American, and Native American; or multi-racial students) adolescents to feel less deserving or not as good as their White counterparts, maintaining the status quo with respect to the racial power hierarchy in society.

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) have asserted that students of color in an oppressive urban high school context need to develop a student identity that opposes overt and covert racism. Racial stereotypes are often automatically activated at school, even without individual negative attitudes or hostile intent (Markus, 2008). Steele (1997, 2010) described this “threat in the air”, or the risk of confirming a negative stereotype about one’s group that is enough to impair performance in valued domains, such as academic performance. When students of color feel they are being evaluated through the lens of a negative stereotype in standardized tests, they are likely to perform less well in those situations. Awareness of racial stereotypes and group membership status are prominent in identity formation and self-other appraisal during adolescence (Spencer et al., 2006). In a similar vein, Sue and colleagues (2008) have found that everyday racial micro-aggressions send denigrating messages to people of color, communicating hostile, derogatory, and negative slights and insults with unpleasant or harmful psychological impact. Adolescents suffer from stereotype threat and racial micro-aggressions, phenomena that can lead them to internalize notions that they are inferior. The psychological armor to actively resist these forms of racism is critical during this developmental period as they prepare for their adult lives. Adoption of more sophisticated racial identity attitudes, beliefs, and cognitions can promote healthy functioning.

Helms (e.g., 2003) has criticized claims that a lifelong exposure to racism leads Black people in particular to have a self-disparaging racial identity, assumptions that have existed in developmental science literature for some time (Erikson, 1968). Recently, critically-oriented psychological models have been advanced to explain how Black adolescents can replace negative socialization messages with positive self-conceptions (Nicolas et al., 2008). Pierce (1975) described the “mundane extreme environmental stress” of racism in adolescence and saw the importance of the ability to see oneself as part of a larger group from which one can draw support to cope. Tatum (1997) also encouraged racial solidarity as a strategy to prevent social isolation. Tatum suggested that one’s awareness of the daily challenges of a racist society and the shared identity experience with others who have lived it can be immensely helpful. Healthy racial identity development involves replacing false and negative internalized racial messages with more realistic ones about societal racial groups and about one’s self relative to one’s own and other racial groups (Helms, 2003).

### **People of Color Racial Identity Theory.**

The racial identity construct in this study will be based on Helms’s (1984, 1990a, 1995b) people of color (POC) racial identity theory. Adapted from her black racial identity theory, the POC premise is that members of ALANA groups are exposed to racial socialization (e.g. systemic racism, skin color discrimination) different from members of the White group. White people, as a collective, control society’s resources and have the power to determine who has access and who are “less than” deserving (Jones, 1997, as cited by Helms, 2003). The realities of ALANA individuals are exposed to direct or vicarious racial life experiences, with the



potential of internalizing negative messages of “Who am I?” (Helms, 2003). There are common developmental themes in sociopolitical contexts for ALANA individuals, though POC theory does not assume that all negative racial socialization issues are the same across all groups (Alvarez & Helms, 2001).

POC racial identity theory holds that people of color in the U.S. undergo a process of ego maturation characterized by the progressive development of various racial identity statuses (Helms, 1990a). These variations represent the extent to which individuals identify with their own race or the White race as reflected in four identity statuses. Involving hypothetical intrapsychic or motivational forces, the interrelated statuses reflect a person’s level of racial consciousness and subsequent response to positive and negative race-related experiences. Helms’s (1996) proposed schemata are observable or measurable behavioral expressions of the statuses. Each racial identity status gives rise to a corresponding racial identity schema, or filters through which information is processed. The more advanced the development of racial identity, the more the set of strategies are complex and flexible to protect the individual psychologically. Individuals exhibit characteristics of more than one status or schema, but customarily there is a stronger status (higher scores on particular subscale) with which one operates as he or she negotiates racial situations and/or defines self and other (Helms, 1995a). This study utilizes Helms’s POC Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (PRIAS; 1995b) in which higher scores indicate greater endorsement of the specific subscale attitude, namely: Conformity, Dissonance, Immersion-Resistance, and Internalization.

Conformity schema and status are characterized by the active or passive devaluing of one’s own racial group and idealization of the White group as the person attempts to live life as

“just an American” (Helms, 2003). The person who uses the Conformity schema is likely oblivious to ALANA groups sociopolitical histories and socio-racial concerns, using denial, obliviousness, selective perception, distortion, and minimization as information processing strategies (Helms & Cook, 1999). These strategies reflect ways to deal with racial stimuli that devalues an individual’s own racial group and conforms to the racial status quo (Helms, 1995a). Adolescents may dress or alter their appearance to reflect White values as they perceive White society’s definitions as the standards of merit. Using this schema, these adolescents may be perceived by their ALANA peers as “White identified” and may tend not to socialize with their peers of color if such associations can be avoided (Helms, 2003).

Dissonance schema and status are characterized by ambivalence and confusion (Helms & Cook, 1999). Self-consciousness and possibly self-debilitating preoccupation with unanswered questions about one’s socio-racial group commitment may manifest in adolescence as well as lack of stable peer group relations (Helms, 2003). This person of color may notice the lack of fit in the White world and the dearth of positive material about one’s own group to replace the waning idealization of the White group. Information processing strategies of the Dissonance schema include using repression or unpredictable emotional responses to anxiety-evoking racial information, anxiety, and disorientation (Helms & Cook, 1999).

Immersion-Resistance schema and status are characterized by idealizing one’s ascribed ALANA group, committing to own-group standards to self-define, and valuing loyalty (Helms & Cook, 1999). They may denigrate everything perceived to be White and withdraw from contexts or life experiences perceived to be irrelevant to one’s ALANA group. Information-processing strategies of this schema include dichotomous thinking, hypervigilance, and hypersensitivity

toward racial stimuli (Helms & Cook, 1999). Themes of anger may be present as the adolescent endorses ideas such as “Most White people are untrustworthy” (Helms, 1995a). Adolescents may change their appearance through clothing and hairstyle to identify with their own ALANA groups or stick to like-race peers, particularly if such associations support the person’s development of a sense of self-assurance (Helms, 2003).

The final PRIAS subscale attitude is Internalization. This schema and status are characterized by a personally meaningful affirmation of self that is based on race and flexible race relations (Helms, 1995a). Healthy acknowledgement and confrontation of racial stimuli involve realistic appraisals of the environment and one’s flexible reactions in that environment. The adolescent can “rationally” resolve racial issues in the conflicting themes of White society as well as to one’s self and own racial group (Helms, 2003). Adolescents endorsing these attitudes shift away from how their friends see them toward confidence in personal standards, dissonance resolution and a deep sense of connection to their racial community (Cross, 1991). Cross also describes the racial orientation varying from nationalism to multiculturalism. There is an integration of social oppression-based and cultural empowerment-based themes (Stevenson, 1995). Through positive internalization and capacity to objectively assess, the adolescent may realize that this self-exploration requires weighing and integrating complex racial information (Helms & Cook, 1999).

In sum, healthy racial identity development consists of identifying with one’s own ALANA group, coupled with the capacity to resist disconfirming racial societal socialization (Helms, 2003). The school environment, with its consistent influence on adolescents, is an institution that communicates racial messages, steers racial identity development, and indirectly

reinforces the perception that Whites are superior (Helms, 2003). Urban adolescents of color need meaningful affirmation to transition successfully from school to work. One example is that students in predominantly ALANA schools are virtually always the inferior performers when White/ALANA comparisons on academic achievement are made. This pushes the agenda that students of color are expected to conform to the White ideal, often without adequate resources or equivalent opportunities (Helms, 2003). When extended to the academic and career achievements that are expected to develop in a high school curriculum, these adolescents need the tools to value their racial identity in a larger society that might not do so. More research regarding adolescents' skills for coping with the racism they encounter when preparing for the world of work needs to be examined using Helms's racial identity theory. To expand the literature, this present study aims to explicitly investigate the contribution of racial identity development to our understanding of career adaptability.

### **Applications of Racial Identity Theory in Career Development.**

Despite the importance of race pertaining to adolescents' self-perceptions, few investigations exist on the intersection of racial identity and career development. Fouad and Byars-Winston (2005) described how race interacts with the world of work through psychological perceptions of the opportunity structure, suggesting the salience of racial processes shaping vocational behavior. Racial identity development is one of the most widely recognized psychological theories used to describe individual differences in relation to sociopolitical contexts (Helms, 2007). Helms and Piper (1994) theorized that racial identity affects career interests through an individual's assessment of the racial climate of particular career paths.

Studying youths of color in the educational system can be a means to understanding the importance and complexity of racial identity given the political, social, and economic challenges that they face in the preparation for work (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009). Some research has suggested that adolescents of color who have supportive relationships that promote feelings of agency and strategies for overcoming discrimination are less likely to feel disempowered by race and social class barriers and have increased dimensions of career adaptability (Conchas, 2001; Kenny & Bledsoe, 2005; O'Connor, 1997).

In a study of Black first-year undergraduate students, Gainor and Lent (1998) applied SCCT to find support explaining their math-related interests and choice intentions. Racial identity did not significantly interact with outcome expectations, though results were close to significance ( $R^2_{\text{change}} = .004$ ,  $F_{\text{change}} = 2.37$ ,  $p = .06$ ). The absence of significant moderator effects suggested that Black students' math self-efficacy and outcome expectations were jointly predictive of their math-related interests, across the levels of racial identity attitudes. The researchers discussed the possibility that racial identity may be more useful in explaining vocational process than vocational content, as their study investigated the latter. They also cited limitations of the subpar internal consistency coefficients for the dissonance and internalization scales, suggesting that the scales were not assessing homogenous constructs in their sample. Gainor and Lent (1998) also noted that interventions related to outcome expectations may be less potent with older students but more helpful for younger students. While their SCCT analysis of race-sensitive variables was statistically insignificant, recognizing the usefulness of racial identity theory in the vocational processes of students of color can inform programs that address racial underrepresentation in certain career fields.

Helms and Piper (1994) suggested that racial identity theory has the potential to explain certain aspects of vocational development, such as satisfaction. Differences in the levels of the racial identity attitudes should be predictive of environmental adaptations, as the schema should operate in a manner associated with social cognitive factors in the career process. Helms's PRIAS has been utilized in numerous research studies concerning college students and adults, yet more research is needed utilizing the PRIAS with adolescents (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009), particularly as this is a critical period in which the salience of race can facilitate adolescents' career development (Marko & Savickas, 1998).

### **Racial Identity Schemas Differentially Predict Career Adaptability.**

Racial identity schemas reflect strategies that can help a person self-actualize racially and in the world of work through the progressive development of racial identity statuses (Helms & Piper, 1994). Each person possesses all of the schemas, and the strongest one reflects a person's level of racial consciousness, preferred information processing strategies, and subsequent response to positive and negative race-related experiences (Helms, 1995b). As adolescents build work-readiness skills, these schemas presumably impact their development. Hence, racial identity development involves the acquisition of increasingly complex social-cognitive sophistication that can allow adolescents to prepare for and participate more effectively in the working role.

In a study of black college students enrolled at a predominantly White university, Wilson and Constantine (1999) reviewed mixed findings in the literature for Immersion-Resistance. They noted that the anxiety, anger, and personal uncertainty related to this status leads students

of color to experience intense, ambivalent emotions about their self-perception that may contribute to inconsistent findings. Although Wilson and Constantine anticipated a significant negative relationship between Immersion and self-concept, their study's results did not support this hypothesis. More similar in age to the current investigation's sample, a study of racial identity attitudes and academic achievement found that urban African American high school students missed more school when use of Immersion schema was high (Sandoval et al., 1997). Helms (2003) surmised that these students may cope with perceived racism by expressing anger or withdrawing psychologically, consequently receiving lower grades from teachers (poorer academic performance) who unduly punish them for not conforming to school's racial norms. She speculated whether students disengage or their teachers participate in disengaging them. Given these observations, I expect Immersion to have a negative relationship with career adaptability.

Furthermore, Jackson and Neville (1998) examined the relationship between vocational identity and racial identity in African American college students attending a predominantly White university. They found that scores on the PRIAS accounted for a significant amount of the vocational identity variance above and beyond demographic variables for women, but not for men. Specifically, Conformity was associated in a negative direction and Internalization associated in a positive direction with vocational identity. Constantine and Wilson (1999) found that Pre-encounter racial attitudes – corresponding to Conformity in that there is a strong White frame of reference and strong devaluing of one's own group – were significantly negatively related to self-concept. Given the trend of previous research, I expect that Conformity will be negatively associated with career adaptability in the current study.

The Internalization status indicates an individual's positive commitment to and acceptance of one's own socioracial group, internally defined racial attributes, and capacity to objectively assess and respond to members of the dominant group (Helms, 1990a). Individuals who are characterized by this status can make life decisions by assessing and integrating socioracial group requirements and self-assessment. Jackson and Neville (1998) encouraged career development specialists to consider racial identity among students of color, as their findings showed that healthy vocational identity development is related to more developed racial identity attitudes. Internalization has also been found to account for greater psychological adjustment and enable students of color to move beyond systematic and institutional barriers (Brookins, Anyabwile, & Nacoste, 1996; Cheatham, 1990), which I hypothesize will account for higher levels of career adaptability.

Subjective well-being is a dependent variable in this study and recent findings by Iwamoto and Liu (2010) have linked racial identity influences to the well-being of college students. Iwamoto and Liu found significant relationships between racial identity statuses and well-being for Asian American and Asian international college and graduate students. Results from their correlational analyses suggested that well-being was inversely correlated with Conformity, Dissonance, and Immersion-Resistance – attitudes that focus primarily on racism. Their hierarchical regression results found Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance to be significant predictors of well-being. Internalization was a particularly robust predictor of well-being. Adding to the previously mentioned hypotheses, Dissonance is also expected to be negatively associated with career adaptability.



Perry's (2008) study on urban adolescents of color found that conformity was positively associated with behavioral school engagement. The more Dissonance-related anxiety and confusion diminished in his study, the more likely students would be engaged in school. In contrast with previous research, he did not find a meaningful impact of Immersion-emersion on school engagement. Consistent with other findings, Internalization exerted a unique positive contribution to school engagement.

In sum, evidence that the Internalization schema affirms racial group membership in ways that benefit school engagement (Conchas, 2001; Perry, 2008; Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001) and psychological adjustment (Brookins et al., 1996; Cheatham, 1990), I hypothesize that Internalization will have a significant positive relationship with career adaptability dimensions of urban high school students. Because there have been few empirical applications of the PRIAS to adolescent participants, this study also explores the extent to which Conformity, Dissonance, and Immersion-Resistance uniquely contribute to career adaptability. Synthesizing the findings thus far, I hypothesize that those three schemata, as they reflect internal conflict, will be negatively related to career adaptability.

### **Considerable Strengths**

Nicolas and colleagues (2008) have noted the missing dialogue on how Black youths function effectively "in a variety of social contexts that expect the worst of them" (p.262). They emphasized the need to offset how the literature ascribes negative behaviors such as violence, substance abuse, school underachievement, and family instability to define urban youths' "typical" existence. By proposing a conceptual framework on the development of strengths

rather than deficits, they look beyond environmental forces and focus on the “sense of youths’ active participation in determining who they become” (Nicolas et al., 2008, p.262). They challenge the pervasive philosophy that it is normative for urban youths to be passive recipients and instead seek to study the process, skills, and attributes that are related to positive outcomes and well-being.

Due to the overemphasis of negative environmental forces and struggles that urban adolescents encounter, far less is known about their successes and strengths (Nicolas et al., 2008). Borrowing the definition from Nicolas and colleagues (2008), strengths are “abilities to analyze situations for race-related power imbalances and to negotiate the related challenges or barriers to optimal functioning from a position of pride in oneself, self-esteem, and affirmative self-agency (i.e. a belief that one can make a positive difference) throughout... development” (p.265). While many of these students come from low-income households and attend class in relatively impoverished school districts, many of them do succeed to graduate high school and pursue higher education and skilled work (Vera et al., 2008).

Thus, shifting the focus to reflect an interest in strengths optimally will shed light on the way this group makes healthy transitions into the world of work. More research is needed to identify affirmative influences on the career adaptability of urban adolescents of color. The present study examines critical consciousness and racial identity schemas as social-cognitive abilities that can allow students living in disenfranchised contexts to cope effectively with oppression. Instead of perpetuating urban adolescents of color as “at-risk” and passive recipients of chronic stressors (Nicolas et al., 2008), this study seeks to better understand the psychological

armor that promotes resistance against negativity and strives for greater outcome expectations and work satisfaction.

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

Studies on urban youths have been increasing (Diemer et al., 2006; Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Kenny et al., 2003; Kenny et al., 2006; Noonan et al., 2007; Perry, 2008) and the current research adds to the continued exploration of predictors of adaptive attitudes about the self in relation to school and work. Because of experiences with sociopolitical oppression and institutional racism that urban adolescents of color encounter, I believe that high levels critical consciousness and positive internalized racial identity represent strengths that can promote career adaptability, as measured on two dimensions: outcome expectations and subjective well-being. The present investigation consisted of two multiple regression analyses on the separate dependent variables and explored two research questions: (1) Do critical consciousness and racial identity attitudes explain significant variation in career adaptability? (2) To what extent do levels of critical consciousness and racial identity statuses significantly account for career adaptability? The following hypotheses are informed by relevant theoretical concepts and research findings from diverse settings and populations, previously synthesized in the literature review:

H<sub>1</sub>: A model containing both critical consciousness and racial identity statuses will significantly predict both dimensions of career adaptability, as defined by career outcome expectations and subjective well-being.

H<sub>2</sub>: Higher levels of critical consciousness will have a significant positive effect in predicting outcome expectations and subjective well-being.

H<sub>3</sub>: The Conformity status of racial identity will have a significant negative effect in predicting outcome expectations and subjective well-being.

H<sub>4</sub>: The Dissonance status of racial identity will have a significant negative effect in predicting outcome expectations and subjective well-being.

H<sub>5</sub>: The Immersion-Resistance status of racial identity will have a significant negative effect in predicting outcome expectations and subjective well-being.

H<sub>6</sub>: The Internalization status of racial identity will have a significant positive effect in prediction outcome expectations and subjective well-being.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Research Design**

The present study used a passive post hoc design on an archival data set from a Boston public high school. Quantitative data were collected on a cohort of urban adolescents of color who completed various survey instruments, including the measures needed for this investigation. The present study utilized multiple regression analyses to describe how predictor variables are related to a single outcome variable. The predictor variables of critical consciousness and racial identity were examined in relationship to career adaptability outcome variables – career outcome expectations and subjective well-being. Two simultaneous regression equations were produced for the purpose of predicting each of these dimensions of career adaptability.

#### **Method**

##### **Participants**

Ideally, estimated effect sizes should be based on a review of past research using the same predictors (SDO, PRIAS) and outcomes (SATCAP and OES). This step was not feasible as statistical relationships between these predictors and outcomes have not been established or published. There have been several studies that have used the independent variables with different dependent variables of career development. Perry's (2008) study on vocational exploration and racial identity in urban youth of color found that career planning and racial identity exerted a medium effect size on school engagement. Diemer and Blustein's (2006) study also detected a medium effect size in finding a statistically significant relationship between critical consciousness and career development progress among urban youth ( $f^2 = .15$  to  $.34$ ). Assuming statistical power of .80 and an alpha level of .05, a viable sample of 70 participants

will be sufficient to detect a medium effect size of .20 (Faul et al., 2007). The archival data set included 90 cases which is sufficient to ensure adequate power and variability within each construct.

The sample ( $N = 90$ ) consisted of 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders attending an urban Boston Public high school that consists predominantly of students of color. Parental consent was required of students under the age of 18. Parental consent forms and student assent forms were distributed in both English and Spanish versions. Individuals under the age of 18 with signed consent forms from their parents and those over 18 who assented to the research process were eligible to participate. There were many difficulties in conducting research in this urban high school, as numerous students who were eligible to participate did not attend school on the data collection days or declined to complete the survey due to other factors.

Participants in this study ranged in age from 15.4 to 19.4 with a mean age of 17.7. The gender breakdown was 60% female ( $N = 54$ ) and 40% male ( $N = 36$ ). The grade level breakdown was 23.3% 10<sup>th</sup> graders ( $N = 21$ ), 25.6% 11<sup>th</sup> graders ( $N = 23$ ), and 51.1% 12<sup>th</sup> graders ( $N = 46$ ). The racial makeup of students was as follows: 23.3% Black, African, African-American ( $N = 21$ ); 20% Black, Caribbean, e.g., Haitian, Jamaican, ( $N = 18$ ); 1.1% American-Indian, Eskimo ( $N = 1$ ); 4.4% Asian, Asian-American ( $N = 4$ ); 41.1% Hispanic or Latino ( $N = 37$ ); 1.1% Middle Eastern, e.g., Arab, Turk, Iranian ( $N = 1$ ); 1.1% Cape Verdean ( $N = 1$ ); 6.7% Mixed Race ( $N = 6$ ); and 1.1% No Response ( $N = 1$ ).

**Measures**

All measures in this study were self-report and approved by Boston College's Institutional Review Board and the high school's Office of Research, Assessment, and Evaluation. They assessed the following: demographic information, critical consciousness, racial identity statuses, career outcome expectations, and subjective well-being (Appendix A through E).

**Demographic Information.**

The archival data set included the following demographic information: grade level, birth date, gender, and race/ethnicity (Appendix A).

**Predictor Variables****Critical Consciousness.**

The 16-item Social Dominance Orientation scale (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994; Appendix B) assesses attitudes toward inter-group relations, in particular the degree to which an individual prefers non-egalitarian structured relationships and hierarchies among groups in society. Sample items are "Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups" and "In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups." Respondents rate items using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from Very Negative (1 point) to Very Positive (7 points) with some items reverse-scored. Pratto and colleagues (1994) obtained a mean alpha coefficient of .82 across 14 samples of college students, and test-retest reliability of .81 was estimated over a 3-month period for a subsample of 25 participants. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) have reported

extensive validity evidence such as high scores related to the favoring of hierarchy-enhancing positions; anti-Black prejudice; sexism; support for military programs; and conservative social policies. High scores were also inversely related to measures of empathy, altruism, egalitarianism, and social tolerance. These findings are consistent with the assumption that SDO runs counter to Freire's (1972, 1990) notion of critical consciousness.

Diemer and colleagues (2006) previously operationalized critical consciousness as the capacity to reflect about and question ideologies of group-based dominance. Thus, they inverted the scores on the SDO measure to represent this construct. In the present study, the total score also was inverted so that higher scores corresponded to higher levels of critical consciousness, or the capacity to recognize sociopolitical inequality. Diemer and Blustein (2006) used the SDO scale and inverted scoring method on a sample of urban students from a Northeastern high school. Over 90% of their sample identified as adolescents of color and the alpha coefficient was .85 (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). As such, support for the validity of the SDO can be inferred from the strength of the scale construction process coupled with the results of previous research on a similar sample as the one used in this study. The present data yielded an alpha of .83 for the inverted SDO scale.

### **Racial Identity.**

The Person of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (PRIAS; Helms, 1995b; Appendix C) measures the strength of schema reflective of the different statuses of racial identity. This self-report scale is based on Helms's People of Color Racial Identity model (1995b), Cross's Nigrescence Theory (1971), and the Minority Identity Development Model (Atkinson, Morten,



& Sue, 1998). The PRIAS, which consists of 50 items, was developed for use with Asian American, Black American, American Indian, and Latina/o individuals. These people of color are thought to experience relatively similar social conditions in the United States and have varying psychological responses to racial inequality (Helms, 1990a). The PRIAS assesses information-processing strategies and racial attitudes hypothesized to result from shared racial socialization experiences of People of Color.

Four subscales, corresponding to the five racial identity statuses in Helms's POC racial Identity Theory (1995b), comprise the measure: a.) Conformity (12 items), which measures obliviousness or denial of personal relevance of societal racial dynamics and devaluation of one's own racial group (e.g., "In general, I believe that Whites are superior to other racial groups"); b.) Dissonance (14 items), which measures confusion and disorientation regarding consciousness or awareness of racial dynamics (e.g., "Sometimes I am proud of the racial group to which I belong and sometimes I am ashamed of it"); c.) Immersion-Resistance (14 items), which measures active rejection of the White culture and idealization of and physical and psychological withdrawing into one's own racial group (e.g., "I limit myself to activities involving people of my own race"); and d.) Internalization (10 items), which measures a sense of self-fulfillment wherein individuals have positive own-group racial identification with the capacity for flexible race relations (e.g., "I am comfortable with people regardless of their race").

Respondents use a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5) to indicate how accurately each of the items applies to them. The items assess thoughts and feelings about oneself and members of one's racial groups, relative to one's feelings about Whites. Item responses for each subscale are summed. Respondents receive a score on all four

subscales. Higher scores on certain subscales indicate stronger endorsement or expression of the respective schema.

The internal consistency of these four subscales and support for the overall validity of the measures have been well-documented (Helms & Carter, 1990; Helms, 1995b, 2007). Alvarez and Helms (2001) found that each of the four schemas significantly predicted collective self-esteem among Asian Americans in a manner consistent with the People of Color racial identity theory (Helms, 1995a). Other published research has indicated convergent validity for American-Indians (Bryant & Baker, 2003; Bryant & LaFromboise, 2005) and Black Brazilians (Bianchi et al., 2002). Perry (2008) reported evidence of construct validity on his sample of urban adolescents of color through reported intercorrelations between the PRIAS subscales. Generally consistent with underlying theory, the Conformity subscale was significantly positively correlated with the Dissonance subscale ( $r = .52$ ), significantly positively correlated with the Immersion-Emersion subscale ( $r = .19$ ), and significantly negatively correlated with the Internalization subscale ( $r = -.33$ ). The Dissonance subscale was significantly positively correlated with the Immersion-Emersion subscale ( $r = .48$ ) and significantly negatively correlated with the Internalization subscale ( $r = -.21$ ). Interscale correlations were also calculated for this current study.

Because the PRIAS is a multi-subscale measure, use of Cronbach's alpha coefficients to estimate the reliability of a sample's responses is inappropriate (Helms, 2007). For a measure classified as ipsative, the raw scale scores need to be corrected for lack of reliability using *iota*, a non-traditional psychometric investigation (Jernigan, 2009). Helms (1990a) acknowledged that a "minimum criterion" for use of the PRIAS "is that it possess internal consistency" (p.44), and

she developed *iota* as an internal consistency coefficient. *Iota* is the proportion of an individual's raw score that is attributable to the sum of the absolute deviations from the person's mean score (i.e. within person error variance) subtracted from 1.00 (J. Helms, personal communication, May 4, 2010). Varying from 0 to 1, higher coefficients indicate higher levels of interrelatedness of the items as perceived by the individual.

In a study of 14 Black 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls in a predominantly White high school setting, the pre- and post- *iota* coefficients for the PRIAS scales were: Conformity, .35 to .93; Dissonance, .35 to .83; Immersion/Resistance, .27 to .89; and Internalization, .22 to .96 (Jernigan, 2009). *Iota* is especially appropriate when samples are too small to calculate group-level coefficients such as *alpha* (Jernigan). The present data yielded a comparable range of *iota* internal consistency coefficients: Conformity, .22 to .96; Dissonance, .23 to 1.00; Immersion/Resistance, .29 to 1.00; and Internalization, .43 to 1.00. Table 1 summarizes the means, standard deviations, and range of *iota* coefficients for the participants in the study.

Table 1

*Means and Standard Deviations for Racial Identity Schemas on the People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (N = 88)*

<b>Variables</b>	<b><i>Mean Iota</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>	<b>Obtained Range</b>
Conformity	.55	.17	.22 – .96
Dissonance	.68	.18	.23 – 1.00
Immersion-Resistance	.68	.15	.29 – 1.00
Internalization	.83	.13	.43 – 1.00

*Note:* Racial Identity Schemas were corrected with *Iota*.

**Career Adaptability Outcome Variables****Career Outcome Expectations.**

The Outcome Expectations Scale (OES; McWhirter, Rasheed, & Crothers, 2000; Appendix D) is a six-item measure that assesses the level of positive expectations about one's career choice. Sample items are "I will be successful in my chosen career/occupation," "My talents and skills will be used in my career/occupation," and "The future looks bright for me." Respondents rate items using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1 point) to strongly agree (4 points). The total score is the sum of the responses that can range from 6 to 24, with higher scores corresponding to more positive outcome expectations.

McWhirter and colleagues (2000) used the OES with a sample of urban high school sophomores, 18% of which identified as students of color and the Cronbach's alpha was .83. In terms of validity, the researchers found outcome expectations to correlate significantly ( $r = .54$ ) with a Fouad and Smith (1996) measure of career expectations. Kenny and colleagues (2003) also used the OES on urban ninth-graders, more than 70% of which were students of color and reported a Cronbach's alpha of .85. The present data yielded an alpha coefficient of .83 for the OES.

**Subjective Well-being.**

The Satisfaction with Career and Academic Preferences questionnaire (SATCAP; DeMania, 1999; Appendix E) consists of 20 items developed as a subjective measure of work and school satisfaction. Sample items are "My current situation in school and/or work fits well with my desired career goals," and "I am satisfied with the options available to me in school

and/or work.” DeMania’s (1999) pilot study for this questionnaire with undergraduate student participants enrolled in a psychology department course at the University at Albany, State University of New York yielded a highly internally consistent reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = .96$ ). The diversity of this pilot sample was not reported. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability data on a sample of undergraduate students from both the University at Albany and University of California at San Diego were also equally supportive ( $\alpha = .81$ , DeMania, 1999). Approximately 24% of this sample consisted of students of color. The factor analysis suggested a unidimensional interpretation of the measure (DeMania, 1999).

DeMania found that older adolescents’ who report a stronger attachment to their mother and father are likely to report a greater subjective satisfaction (SATCAP) with their choice of academic majors and career preference. This finding is consistent with theoretical expectations and suggests some preliminary evidence supporting the validity of the SATCAP. In the proposed study, the SATCAP was modified to 18 items to make the measure more developmentally appropriate for high school students. The original 7-point Likert scale was modified to a 5-point scale; despite the modest revisions, the validity of the measure has very likely not been compromised. An alpha of .81 was observed in the current sample for the SATCAP.

### **Statistical Analyses**

Two simultaneous multiple regression analyses were performed on the quantitative data to examine how critical consciousness (inverted SDO scores) and racial identity statuses (PRIAS) jointly contribute to predict career outcome expectations (OES) and subjective well-

being (SATCAP) scores. Due to the relatively small number of cases and lack of previous predictive research findings for this theoretical model, the simultaneous method is the safest to adopt (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2003). Some researchers believe that this method is appropriate for theory testing over stepwise analyses, as stepwise techniques are influenced by random variation in the data and seldom give replicable results (Studenmund & Cassidy, 1987).

Statistically, the first research question – Do critical consciousness and racial identity attitudes explain significant variation in career adaptability? – involved an overall test of the regression equation. Additionally, the second research question – To what extent do racial identity statuses and levels of critical consciousness significantly account for career adaptability? – involved tests of the regression coefficients (i.e., beta weights) for the individual predictor variables. For each of the two multiple regression analyses, I required that  $F$  from the ANOVA of sets of independent variables be significant at  $\alpha = .05$  to protect against inflated setwise Type I error rates. According to Fisher's protected  $t$  test procedure (Carmer & Swanson, 1973), tests on the constituent predictor variables were performed with  $\alpha = .05$  per comparison only if the overall  $F$  meets the .05 criterion, which prevents comparing sample means 95% of the time when the overall null hypothesis are true. The individual contribution of each predictor is reported in Chapter 4 according to the model's ability to predict the outcome.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

This chapter presents the data analysis procedure, methodology and results of the influence of critical consciousness and racial identity on career adaptability. First, issues related to the quantitative data set and missing data are addressed for this study. Next, the preliminary analysis includes descriptive findings for each measure and diagnostics to check the assumptions of a multiple regression analyses. Finally, the main analysis reviews each of the hypotheses and presents the corresponding statistical results.

#### **Data Analysis**

The archival data set sample included 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders attending an urban Boston Public high school consisting of predominantly students of color. After reliability coefficients were calculated, mean substitution was used on items that were missed if there were at least 2 responses for that scale. Ninety students had completed the measures needed for this investigation. However, data from 2 students were excluded because they completed the demographic questionnaire and only 3 out of the 4 total measures, skipping all items of the Person of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (PRIAS; Helms, 1995b). SPSS excludes cases listwise, meaning that if a person has a missing value for a score on the particular variable, then their data is excluded from the whole analysis leaving N=88. This option is preferred for a regression analysis to prevent absurdities such as  $R^2$  resulting in either a negative value or value greater than 1 (Field, 2009).

### Preliminary Analysis

The means (*M*), standard deviations (*SD*), and correlations of all predictor and outcome variables for the sample retained after missing data and outliers were removed (see Diagnostics section) are shown in Table 2. The PRIAS raw subscale scores were corrected for lack of reliability with iota. Iota is the proportion of an individual's raw score that is attributable to the sum of the absolute deviations from the person's mean score (i.e. within person error variance) subtracted from 1.00 (J. Helms, personal communication, May 4, 2010). The iota-corrected score was obtained by multiplying each individual's iota coefficient by their observed score (J. Helms, personal communication, May 4, 2010). Hereafter, iota-corrected PRIAS subscale scores, as opposed to raw scores, are used for this study's quantitative analyses.

Table 2

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of the Predictor and Outcome Variables*

<b>Variables</b>	<b><i>M</i></b>	<b><i>SD</i></b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
1. Critical Consciousness	83.20	15.09	---					
2. Conformity	15.87	7.08	-.39**	---				
3. Dissonance	26.01	10.56	-.29**	.54**	---			
4. Immersion-Resistance	26.64	9.48	-.27*	.44**	.52**	---		
5. Internalization	33.19	9.84	.46**	-.32**	-.24*	-.19	---	
6. Outcome Expectations	20.36	2.50	.27*	-.18	-.29**	-.14	.33**	---
7. Subjective Well-being	63.93	9.52	.40**	-.26**	-.48**	-.46**	.45**	.47**

*Note:* Critical Consciousness = inverted Social Dominance Orientation (iSDO); 4 subscale scores of the PRIAS have been iota-corrected; Outcome Expectations Scale (OES); Subjective Well-being = Satisfaction with Career and Academic Preferences questionnaire (SATCAP)

\*  $p < .05$ .      \*\*  $p < .01$ .



**Age.**

To examine the possible confounding effect of age, correlations and ANOVAs were performed. There were no significant relationships between age and Critical Consciousness (iSDO,  $r = -.084$ ); Conformity ( $r = -.005$ ); Dissonance ( $r = -.068$ ); Immersion-Resistance ( $r = -.048$ ); Internalization ( $r = -.033$ ); Career Outcome Expectations (OES,  $r = .144$ ); and Subjective Well-being (SATCAP,  $r = -.096$ ). An additional examination of possible relations between age and these variables was done by splitting the students into two groups: one group of students below the mean age of 17.7 and another group of students above the mean age. Furthermore, no differences were observed on the age variable for Critical Consciousness [ $t(88) = -0.35, p = .73$ ], Conformity [ $t(86) = -0.03, p = .98$ ], Dissonance [ $t(86) = -1.32, p = .19$ ], Immersion-Resistance [ $t(86) = -0.56, p = .58$ ], Internalization [ $t(86) = 0.50, p = .62$ ], Career Outcome Expectations [ $t(88) = 1.69, p = .09$ ], and Subjective Well-being [ $t(88) = 0.05, p = .96$ ]. Hence, age was not entered as a control variable in the main analysis.

**Diagnostics.**

Prior to the analysis, diagnostics were conducted to examine the assumptions of the multiple regression analyses (Berry, 1993, as cited in Field, 2009). Assumptions were met regarding non-zero variance of predictors, and all values of the outcome variable were independent from the predictors (Field, 2009). The assumption of no multicollinearity was met as there were no high correlations above .80 nor perfect linear relationships between two or more of the predictors (Field, 2009). Multiple regression analysis relies on the assumption of normally distributed data and normality was examined visually through the plotting of scores on a

histogram and through descriptive statistics that measure shape. Values of skewness and kurtosis that are close to zero signify data that is close to normally distributed and these significance tests are recommended for smaller sample sizes (Field, 2009).

In a check of the distribution of scores, it was found that values of skewness and kurtosis were not within acceptable levels on the OES outcome variable. A closer examination of the z-scores revealed that four significant outliers were above 3.29 standard deviations from the mean. Students 14, 33, 37, and 61 had scores that were detected as OES outliers, creating a negative skew in the data. Because these problem cases were not due to incorrect data entry, the suggestions of Field (2009) were followed to delete the data from each participant who contributed the outlier. Returning to the earlier discussion of the method for missing data points, SPSS excludes these cases listwise, and because these outcome variable scores were deleted, these four students' other data were excluded from the rest of the analyses. When z-scores of skewness and kurtosis were compared with the outliers removed, the absolute values of these z-scores were found to be below the threshold and non-significant.

I decided to remove these four cases and conduct diagnostics on the remaining 84 cases. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this sample size is still greater than a viable sample of 70 participants assuming statistical power of .80 and an alpha level of .05 to detect a medium effect size of .20 (Faul et al., 2007). Thus, the final sample retained for analysis consists of 84 subjects, which is sufficient to ensure adequate power and variability within each construct when 5 predictors are included in each regression model. Tests of normality, linearity, independence of observations, and homoscedasticity indicated that assumptions for the multiple regression analyses were then met after removing the impact of the four outliers.

### **Main Analyses**

In the correlation approach to regression analysis, two multiple regression models were constructed using the simultaneous method. This method relies on good theoretical reasons for including the chosen predictors (Field, 2009) and is recommended among other statistical procedures due to the relatively small number of cases and lack of previous predictive research findings (Brace, Kemp, & Snelgar, 2003). Because minor variations in the data due to sampling errors can have a large effect on the order in which variables are entered and retained, statistical methods like forward, backward, and stepwise should only be used when there is a large number of cases. Therefore, using the simultaneous method is safest for the relatively small sample in this study. The predictors are specified as Critical Consciousness as measured by iSDO and the iota-corrected scores for 4 racial identity statuses as measured by the PRIAS: Conformity, Dissonance, Immersion-Resistance, and Internalization. The success of these models in predicting the two separate outcomes, OES and SATCAP, is assessed.

*Q<sub>1</sub>: Do critical consciousness and racial identity attitudes explain significant variation in career adaptability?*

Simultaneous multiple regression analyses were performed to investigate the first research question with OES and SATCAP as separate outcomes representing two dimensions of career adaptability. The first hypothesis tests how well the overall regression models predict the outcome variables.

*H<sub>1</sub>: A model containing both critical consciousness and racial identity statuses will significantly predict both dimensions of career adaptability, as defined by career outcome expectations and subjective well-being.*

The results provide strong support for this hypothesis. Both overall tests of the regression models on the separate outcome variables of Career Outcome Expectations and Subjective Well-being were significant at  $p < .05$ . The linear combination of critical consciousness and racial identity statuses accounted for 17% of the variance in career outcome expectations,  $F_{5,78} = 3.13, p < .05$ . Using a separate simultaneous regression method, a significant model also emerged for subjective well-being, accounting for 43% of the variance,  $F_{5,78} = 11.81, p < .01$ . The Adjusted  $R^2$  provides an index of the extent to which the models generalize. If the OES model were derived from the population rather than a sample, it would account for approximately 6% less variance (difference between .17 and .11) in the outcome. Similarly, if derived from the population, the SATCAP model would account for approximately 4% less variance in the outcome (difference between .43 and .39). The Durbin-Watson statistics inform us that the assumption of independent errors is tenable, as values close to 2 indicates that this assumption has been met. The results of the simultaneous multiple regression analysis for OES and SATCAP are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Tests of the Overall Multiple Regression: Model Summary and ANOVA*

<b>Model</b>	<b><i>R</i></b>	<b><i>R</i><sup>2</sup></b>	<b><i>Adj R</i><sup>2</sup></b>	<b><i>F</i></b>	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b>Durbin-Watson</b>
OES <sup>a</sup>	.41	.17	.11	3.131	.01*	1.998
SATCAP <sup>a</sup>	.66	.43	.39	11.808	.00**	2.120

*Note:* OES = Outcome Expectations Scale; SATCAP = Satisfaction with Career and Academic Preferences questionnaire/Subjective Well-being

a. Predictors (Constant), iSDO, Conformity, Dissonance, Immersion-Resistance, and Internalization

\*  $p < .05$ .      \*\*  $p < .01$ .

*Q<sub>2</sub>: To what extent do racial identity statuses and levels of critical consciousness significantly account for career adaptability?*

This second research question involves hypotheses about the regression coefficients, and the results are organized by the next five hypotheses. As found in the support of the first hypothesis, both OES and SATCAP models show significant fit to the data overall. Now tests of the regression coefficients (i.e., beta weights) for the individual predictor variables are reviewed for additive effects. In assessing the assumption of no multicollinearity, the VIF and tolerance statistics indicate that since all of the VIF values are less than 10 and tolerance values are greater than .2, collinearity is not a cause for concern in these models. These results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Summary of Multiple Regression Coefficients: Critical Consciousness and Racial Identity Subscales Predicting Outcome Expectations and Subjective Well-being*

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Toler.	VIF
OES model							
Constant	17.48	2.12			.000		
iSDO	0.02	0.02	.13	1.04	.301	.72	1.40
Conformity	0.02	0.05	.06	0.46	.647	.61	1.63
Dissonance	-0.06	0.03	-.25	-1.88	.064	.61	1.65
Immersion-Resistance	0.01	0.03	.04	0.35	.730	.68	1.47
Internalization	0.06	0.03	.24*	2.02	.047	.77	1.31
SATCAP model							
Constant	56.55	6.68			.000		
iSDO	0.10	0.06	.15	1.52	.137	.72	1.40
Conformity	0.26	0.15	.19	1.75	.084	.61	1.63
Dissonance	-0.29	0.10	-.32**	-2.90	.005	.61	1.65
Immersion-Resistance	-0.28	0.10	-.28**	-2.68	.009	.68	1.47
Internalization	0.31	0.10	.32**	3.25	.002	.77	1.31

*Note:* iSDO = inverted Social Dominance Orientation/Critical Consciousness; 4 subscale scores of the PRIAS have been iota-corrected; OES = Outcome Expectations Scale; SATCAP = Satisfaction with Career and Academic Preferences questionnaire/Subjective Well-being

\*  $p < .05$ .      \*\*  $p < .01$ .

*H<sub>2</sub>: Higher levels of critical consciousness will have a significant positive effect in predicting outcome expectations and subjective well-being.*

While the multiple regression analysis evidenced that critical consciousness had a positive association with both OES and SATCAP, the effects were non-significant.

*H<sub>3</sub>: The Conformity status of racial identity will have a significant negative effect in predicting outcome expectations and subjective well-being.*

The results did not support this hypothesis. Valuing or conforming to White cultural characteristics had a positive association on both outcomes which represented a different direction than hypothesized. Conformity was not significant in predicting either OES or SATCAP.

*H<sub>4</sub>: The Dissonance status of racial identity will have a significant negative effect in predicting outcome expectations and subjective well-being.*

The results provided support for the SATCAP model but not the OES model. Both analyses evidenced a negative association with career adaptability as hypothesized, however Dissonance was only significant in predicting subjective well-being. In the SATCAP model, as the score on Dissonance subscale of the PRIAS increases by 1 standard deviation (10.56 units) subjective well-being decreases by .32 standard deviations (3.05).

*H<sub>5</sub>: The Immersion-Resistance status of racial identity will have a significant negative effect in predicting outcome expectations and subjective well-being.*

The results provided support for the SATCAP model but not for the OES model. In the SATCAP model, as the score on Immersion-Resistance increases by 1 standard deviation (9.48), subjective well-being decreases by .28 standard deviations (2.67).

*H<sub>6</sub>: The Internalization status of racial identity will have a significant positive effect in prediction outcome expectations and subjective well-being.*

The Internalization status was by far the most salient predictor in both models. There was strong evidence supporting this hypothesis for both dimensions of career adaptability. Internalization was significantly associated in a positive direction with the OES and SATCAP models. In the OES model, as the score on Internalization increases by 1 standard deviation (9.84), the score on outcome expectations scale increases by .24 standard deviations (0.6). In the SATCAP model, as the score on Internalization increases by 1 standard deviation (9.84), subjectively well-being increases by .31 standard deviations (2.95).

## **Summary**

In sum, career adaptability is influenced, to some extent, by this study's selected predictors as found in the overall tests of the regression models. While critical consciousness did not have a significant impact on either multiple regression model, the importance of each variable is dependent on the company that it keeps in the equations. Specifically for the racial identity predictors, hypotheses for Conformity, Dissonance, and Immersion-Resistance were not supported for the OES model, while only Conformity was not a significant predictor in the SATCAP model. High endorsement of the Internalization Status was found to significantly predict both high levels of career outcome expectations and subjective well-being. Additionally,

low levels of Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance were found to uniquely contribute to higher levels of subjective well-being. Chapter 5 will follow with a more in-depth discussion of these implications as well as linking previous research and future directions with the current findings.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The present study sought to investigate the influence of critical consciousness and racial identity on two dimensions of career adaptability. Quantitative data from an archival data set on a cohort of urban adolescents was used to predict the outcome variables of career outcome expectations (OES) and subjective well-being (SATCAP) in two separate simultaneous multiple regression models. Results lend support to the value of how inner-city youths of color internalize inequitable educational and occupational systems, particularly in the way that positive self-conceptions about race can increase career adaptability. In this final chapter, I summarize the results from the study, implications for theory and research as well as for practice and policy, methodological limitations, and future directions for research.

### **Summary of Results**

Both overall regression equations using the simultaneous method were successful in predicting the two dimensions of career adaptability (hypothesis 1). This finding is consonant with the work of Nicolas and colleagues (2008) that argued for adaptive levels of critical consciousness and racial identity as sources of adolescent development strengths in adverse contexts. Their framework proposed that Black adolescents are actively involved in changing oppressive environments by resisting negative social messages. When extended to a sample of urban adolescents of color in this study, the main analyses indicate that including critical consciousness and racial identity as predictors of career adaptability produces significant overall regression equations. Thus, the findings are in line with the Nicolas et al. (2008) argument and

support the present claim that these constructs may be attributes underlying progress in career development tasks.

The results showed partial support for hypothesized relations among the predictors and outcomes. Hypotheses for the predictors Critical Consciousness, Conformity, Dissonance, and Immersion-Resistance were not supported as they did not significantly account for variability in Career Outcome Expectations. The hypotheses for Critical Consciousness, Conformity, and Dissonance for the outcome variable Subjective Well-being were also not supported by the tests of the regression coefficients. Diemer and Blustein (2006) found that Critical Consciousness was associated with perceptions of a vocational future and clarity of vocational identity. While greater levels of Critical Consciousness were significantly related to higher scores on both OES and SATCAP in the correlation matrix (see intercorrelations in Table 2), the multiple regression results were in contrast to those of Diemer and Blustein and did not demonstrate predictive significance with the selected career adaptability dimensions. Racial identity statuses thus appear to be more important than critical consciousness in this study in predicting the career adaptability of urban adolescents of color.

Critical consciousness assesses the questioning of and reflecting about one's place within the social order and rejection of group-based dominance ideologies (Diemer et al., 2006; Diemer & Blustein, 2006). One explanation for the lack of association between Critical Consciousness with the outcome variables may be that there are developmental constraints related to how adolescents feel about oppressive systems beyond race. The section in this chapter entitled "Future Research: Limitations and Directions" will explore this possibility further. Another explanation for the disparity with results from those of Diemer and Blustein (2006) is that there

may in fact be an association, but that multivariate tests are needed to take into account the correlations among the dependent variables. Rather than regressing OES and SATCAP separately on the set of predictors, as the current analysis has done, the significance of societal inequality awareness in conjunction with racial identity statuses may possibly be more sensitively detected in a multivariate model. Future research could more fully illuminate the influence of critical consciousness with different statistical methods.

Regarding the non-significant racial identity schemas, Perry's (2006) research with a similar sample demographic indicated that Conformity had a positive effect on school engagement but not on identification with school. Thus, the contribution of this schema as a predictor has varied with different career development variables. Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance were significant in both models in Perry's study. In contrast, the current findings found a meaningful impact for Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance in Subjective Well-being but not for Career Outcome Expectations. It is possible that there are other potential explanations for the lack of significant contributions of these predictors. A common factor may be related that was not considered in this research. In addition, it is equally plausible that the non-significant constructs may not be relevant for students' career outcome expectations and subjective well-being. Nevertheless, the need for additional research is needed to replicate the current findings and to explore the influences of these non-significant predictors.

Of the hypotheses that were supported, the importance of an affirmative racial identity in this study's model confirmed findings of previous investigations on the Internalization status (Brookins et al., 1996; Cheatham, 1990; Iwamoto & Liu, 2010; Jackson & Neville, 1998). The correlation matrix in the preliminary analysis (Table 2) presented significant bivariate

relationships in directions that provide further evidence of construct validity between subscales of the PRIAS (Perry, 2006). Specifically, there were significant inverse correlations between Conformity and Internalization as well as Dissonance and Internalization, which is consistent with Perry's (2008) intercorrelations of the PRIAS with a sample of urban youths of color.

From these correlations, it was also apparent that all of the predictors were more strongly associated with the outcome variable Subjective Well-being (SATCAP) than Career Outcome Expectations (OES). This finding was further supported by the multiple regression analyses. This came as a surprise since OES has demonstrated strong associations with a multitude of SCCT-driven variables (Ali et al., 2005; Kenny et al., 2003). A study by McWhirter et al. (2000) found that a high school career education class produced only short-term gains in outcome expectations. Additionally, Gainor and Lent (1998) speculated that interventions related to changes in outcome expectations may be less potent with older adolescents compared to interventions with younger students. Thus, it is possible that variability in OES may not have detectable effects with this age group or when used with the selected variables. While the SATCAP measure of subjective well-being has only been utilized in a pilot and validation study with a predominantly White college student population (DeMania, 1999), these findings support its use with urban adolescents of color and indicate its validity for research in samples with more diverse demographics.

The Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance statuses were significant predictors of subjective well-being in a negative direction. This finding is congruent with Iwamoto and Liu's (2010) evidence that low Dissonance, when race-related stress is high, has a moderation effect in increasing sense of well-being of college students. Similarly, Perry (2008) found that the more

Dissonance-related anxiety and confusion diminished, the more likely inner-city high adolescents of color were engaged in school. Also in previous research, Iwamoto and Liu (2010) found a negative relationship between Immersion-Resistance status and well-being. This suggests that ambivalence, confusion, (Dissonance), and hypersensitivity to racial stimuli (Immersion-Resistance) have negative effects on how urban adolescents of color derive well-being from feeling satisfied with school and work.

Furthermore, Helms (2003) has suggested that in adolescence the Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance statuses may manifest in emotional reactions similar to Erikson's (1968) description of general identity confusion. According to Helms, Dissonance is associated with sadness, anxiety, and lack of stable peer group relations, while Immersion-Resistance may lead students to withdraw from school activities or discount contexts or life experiences perceived to be irrelevant to the person's ALANA group. Although the urban public high school from which this sample is drawn consists of predominantly students of color which offers opportunities for support from same-race peers, Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance can still increase psychological stress in the developmental process to overcome negative racial-socialization messages. Their hypothesized effects on subjective well-being have operated in a direction consistent with Helms's theory.

Internalization significantly predicted both dimensions of career adaptability in a positive direction. That is, individuals who exhibit a racially flexibly and integrative affirmation of self have higher levels of career outcome expectations and subjective well-being. The ways that these adolescents can feel confident in their personal standards and feel connected to their racial community despite conflicting themes in White society reflect strengths. The benefits of a

positive, internalized racial identity have been well-documented (Brookins et al., 1996; Cheatham, 1990; Conchas, 2001; Jackson & Neville, 1998; Spencer et al., 2001; Wilson & Constantine, 1999). Furthermore, the Internalization status was a robust predictor of positive psychological well-being in a recent study by Iwamoto and Liu (2010), indicating that the current results support the findings of past research. To this end, feeling more secure about one's racial group and being conscious about the effects of racism (Internalization) may mean that these urban high school students have access to cognitive resources and active coping strategies related to more adaptive work-based attitudes. The implications for the importance of fostering these strengths are discussed in the following sections.

### **Implications for Theory and Research**

Kenny and Bledsoe (2005) previously operationalized one dimension of career adaptability as career outcome expectations. Adding to the literature informing the development and implementation of career “readiness and resources” (Savickas, 2002) for inner-city adolescents of color, the current study proposed an additional career adaptability dimension: subjective well-being (Lent & Brown, 2008). Assessed using the SATCAP measure, subjective well-being demonstrated evidence as a significant outcome dimension when there was low Dissonance, low Immersion-Resistance, and high Internalization racial identity attitudes. With regard to both career construction theory (Savickas, 1997, 2002) and SCCT (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Lent & Brown, 2008), these two career adaptability dimensions are useful in emerging models seeking to understand complex strengths for urban adolescents of color in

negotiating normal vocational development processes and oppressive factors in their environment.

SCCT (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000, 2002) has considered the influence of strengths in the ways that systemic factors can influence the educational and career development of adolescents (Kenny et al., 2003). Applicability of aspects of SCCT to the vocational experiences of adolescents of color has been growing (Gainor & Lent, 1998; Gushue et al., 2006; Kenny et al., 2003; McWhirter, 1997). The present study adds to the body of work that supports the promising usefulness of SCCT as an appropriate theoretical model to examine students of color who face the unique challenges of racism. Given stressors in the societal context, these findings identify aspects of the psychological armor that reinforce adolescents' outcome expectations and subjective well-being. Critical consciousness and racial identity were conceptualized as assets that urban adolescents of color use in their career development. Overall, the findings of this study only supported the importance of racial identity development as an important contributor to career adaptability. This SCCT conceptualization of how these adolescents face the negative experiences in their sociocultural context is significant when certain racial identity statuses are dominant. These results also encourage the need for more theory-driven research using Helms's (1995b; Helms & Piper, 1994) racial identity theory with aspects of SCCT (Lent & Brown, 2008; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) and Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005; also see Hartung & Taber, 2008).

This study does not directly test the propositions of SCCT. However, future research may purposefully call attention to how social factors, such as the psychological experience of race, affect career self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations, which in turn are hypothesized

to determine career interests, goals, and ultimately career behavior (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2002). Additionally, research can evaluate the effectiveness of career initiatives that aim to reduce Dissonance, reduce Immersion-Resistance, and increase Internalization and their impact on SCCT and Career Construction-driven variables. More research focusing on high school students is especially critical to support the validity of utilizing the PRIAS with adolescents (DeCuir-Gunby, 2009; Helms, 2003) and to understand how the tools to value racial identity in a larger society that might not do so can influence postsecondary plans.

Gushue (2006) noted that career-oriented self-exploration should not only be limited to educational or career preferences, but also reflections on broader aspects of identity. The current results illustrate that when urban adolescents of color have less self-debilitating preoccupation with oneself as a racial being, less withdrawal from life experiences perceived to be irrelevant to the person's ALANA group, and more inner self-assurance based on a personally meaningful affirmation of one's racial group, they have more subjective well-being related to career and academic preferences. This suggests that expanding a truncated view on societal realities (reducing Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance) and increasing information-processing strategies to rationally resolve racial issues (Internalization) seems to have a positive and meaningful impact on career development for urban adolescents of color. This provides evidence supporting the following arguments: Helms and Piper's (1994) statement on how racial identity theory has the potential to explain aspects of work satisfaction; Jackson and Neville's (1998) findings that healthy vocational identity development is related to more sophisticated racial identity attitudes; and Fouad and Byars-Winston's (2005) argument on the salience of racial processes shaping vocational behavior. To expand the current use of Helms's racial



identity theory in career development research (1995b; Helms and Piper, 1994), more direct studies should be encouraged to elucidate the way adolescents of color cope with the pervasive effects of racism in their access to educational, training, and employment opportunities.

The findings of this study underscore that fostering a protective level of critical race awareness can enhance an adaptive vocational transition during adolescence. The long-term, entrenched pathology-focused literature that narrowly perseverated on minority deviance and disadvantage has been recently on the decline as adolescents of color are beginning to be examined in context (Spencer, 2005). Spencer has recognized the continued negative impact and controversies of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954, as cited in Spencer, 2005) on the visibility of skin color, poverty, and racial differences in the social science data that remarks on the national achievement gap. Instead of re-assaulting the identity of urban adolescents with victim-blaming, stereotypes, and deficits of diverse youths, this study's findings add to the growing research that seeks to generate a more accurate picture of their context-linked strengths.

Spencer argues that research preoccupied with the social and academic deficits of urban adolescents detrimentally represses achievement indicators and fails to acknowledge how they are "psychologically built" (Spencer, 2005, p.822) to accrue competencies in hostile post-Brown environments. The psychological armor of urban adolescents warrants attention as their normative academic- and career-related tasks are exacerbated by White-privileging conditions. Many youths have habitually demonstrated resilient, productive outcomes in the face of persistent adversity; therefore, an equivalent analysis of protective factors provides an opportunity to support diverse expressions of human potential and how individuals come to function as competent members of society (Spencer et al., 2006).

**Implications for Practice and Policy**

Helms and Piper (1994) have suggested that racial identity affects career development through an individual's assessment of the racial climate of particular career paths. The current findings suggest that elevated reliance on Internalization attitudes and decreased Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance attitudes are associated with high school students of color feeling more satisfied with their school and work environment, while Internalization attitudes can also increase outcome expectations. In urban settings, this population can benefit from strength-enhancing interventions to resist real barriers of racism in their postsecondary transition to the world of work. Consistent with previous research (Brookins et al., 1996; Cheatham, 1990; Iwamoto & Liu, 2010; Jackson & Neville, 1998), a flexible, internalized racial identity played a prominent role in predicting positive youth development. Thus, counselors, educators, and policymakers face the challenge of implementing practice that acknowledge the complexity of race, allow adolescents of color to confront realistic obstacles in their paths (Fouad & Bingham, 1995), and teach them to resist the effects internalized racism.

Relevant to these findings, Hardy and Laszloffy (2007) suggested some empowering strategies in their book *Teens Who Hurt*. These implications for practice describe how counseling should embark on the difficult task of promoting restoration of community at the primary, extended, and cultural levels in the lives of adolescents. When emotional injuries persist due to social forces and messages that are disparaging, shameful or rejecting, high doses of affirmation, nurturance, and consideration for the persons' dignity are important in promoting growth and resilience. Hardy and Laszloffy call mental health professionals to validate, acknowledge strengths and understand certain points of view of being disrespected, even if one

does not agree with it. After gaining this kind of trust, challenging an adolescent can then be presented in a way that preserves rather than assaults their humanity.

Robinson and Ward (1991) encourage identifying and transcending imposed systemic barriers by drawing on one's culture of origin and personal efforts to resist racism. These attempts to counteract the destructiveness of racial discrimination and stigmatized status (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1998) also emphasize the strengths of self and community. Hardy and Laszloffy (2007) emphasized that these adolescents have a more optimistic prognosis in therapy and beyond when they can have some semblance of meaningful connections in their lives by "taking an active role in confronting the unjust social conditions that contribute to racial, gender, class, sexual orientation, and religious oppression" (Hardy & Laszloffy, 2007, p.207).

In this strategy of counteracting devaluation, Hardy and Laszloffy (2007) suggest that therapists, parents, teachers, and other concerned adults can help adolescents feel pride and confidence about the different dimensions of their identities, especially in this race-conscious society. Second, challenging even the smallest expression of oppression re-humanizes loss with validation and empathy. What the world conveys to adolescents often clashes with what adults tell them what to do. A systemic orientation that recognizes the interplay of hurt and suffering can re-channel responses to injustice towards healing and encourage constructive peer relationships and positive social networks. The "mundane extreme environmental stress" (Pierce, 1975) of racism requires seeing oneself as part of a larger group from which one can gain support to cope and discover racial solidarity as a strategy to prevent social isolation (Tatum, 1997). Specifically using a career construction lens (Savickas, 2002, 2005), the application of these re-humanizing strategies in career counseling can assist adolescents to utilize

social roles towards subjective well-being and help them choose, adjust to, and use work as a way to achieve self-completion (Hartung, 2008).

Integrating the counseling practice recommendations of Hardy and Laszloffy (2007) to restore community at the primary, extended and cultural levels also has practical relevance for career development reform. Solberg and colleagues (2002) reviewed a classroom intervention called Tools for Tomorrow (TFT; Blustein et al., 2001 cited in Solberg et al., 2002) that included a collaboration of teachers, administrators, school counselors, and counseling psychologists. TFT sought to increase the strengths of urban youths by building academic and vocational competencies to prepare them for work across the lifespan. TFT focused on these adolescents' self-concepts to empower their self-determination and to establish meaningful mentoring for critical relational support. This synthesis of psychological, interpersonal education attempted to enhance the students' motivation and rectify adults' assumptions that urban students cannot succeed. The TFT curriculum included a committed and extensive partnership that attempted to change explicit and subtle messages and norms by increasing the relational, social, and cultural conceptualizations of students, as viewed by teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents.

Echoing these recommendations in the career development literature, Kenny, Blustein, Chaves, Grossman, and Gallagher (2003) suggested that youths from disenfranchised backgrounds could benefit from career interventions that help them access social support. Juntunen and colleagues (2001) found that the working lives of a culture that fosters collectivist values were explicitly linked to collaboration with family and communities. As suggested in the Juntunen et al. contribution, steering racial identity development by targeting the relational context and social networks of career adaptability can have major consequences on connecting

the role of relationships to one's work life. Moreover, the findings reported by Ali, McWhirter, and Chronister (2005) on career outcome expectations indicate that similar age role models such as siblings and peers can strengthen self-efficacy for adolescents from lower socioeconomic contexts.

Other career development scholars have made practice recommendations that place relationships center-stage. Noonan, Hall, and Blustein (2007) suggested that mentoring can provide a balanced message of possibility and useful strategies to deal with the impact of privilege, respect, bias, stigma, and power imbalances. Scheel, Madabhushi, and Backhaus (2009) found evidence that caring relationships are a key factor in nurturing academic motivation. They urged that schools should not dismiss the families of students at-risk as too dysfunctional to help, and that the creation of a positive learning environment should include the influence of family members. DeMania (1999) found that older adolescents' who report a stronger attachment to their mother and father are likely to report a greater subjective satisfaction with their choice of academic majors and career preference. Input from peers, family, and community members also had a positive impact on urban adolescents in the findings of Diemer and colleagues (2006), particularly in the realm of gaining support for challenging racism and social injustice during high school. Although Critical Consciousness was not a significant predictor in the current findings, it is worth examining how the relational context can shape the ability to think critically on the social stratification barriers that thwart young people's goals (Noonan et al., 2007). The sum of these recommendations advocate for increased social support in work-based interventions.

Healthy and more sophisticated racial self-concepts can be targeted in educational, vocational and counseling programs designed to help adolescents both critically exchange perspectives and strive for greater career adaptability. Internalization racial identity attitudes were significant in predicting higher levels of outcome expectations and subjective well-being in this study, highlighting how increasing the capacity to cope with barriers in career development can follow from strengthening Internalization. Erikson (1963, 1968) has remarked on the intense growth and self-discovery that characterizes this period. Accompanying that normal developmental stress is the invisibility, silence, stereotypes, and discrimination that adolescents of color fight to overcome (Tatum, 1997). The significant findings on Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance as sources of stress that increase identity confusion and rigidity with one's own ALANA racial group can inform interventions to increase racial pride and racism awareness. It is not enough to assume that because an urban school is predominantly made up of students of color that the presence of same-race peers automatically enhances well-being. For example, urban adolescents using the Immersion-Resistance schema may withdraw from experiences perceived irrelevant to his or her ALANA group, thus obscuring areas of potential talent (Helms, 2003) and as these results indicate, decrease satisfaction with academic and career preferences. Tatum (1997) has drawn attention to the need for a positive self-defined racial identity for adolescents of color to survive psychologically. She rallied educators and parents to interrupt the racism that places them at risk by hearing their voices and affirming their identities at school and at home.

Policy changes also are needed to increase social equity for populations that have historically and systematically been shortchanged in opportunities for success: "Every social

indicator, from salary to life expectancy reveals the advantages of being White (Tatum, 1997, p.8). The merits of career development programs may lie in fostering the development of strengths for urban adolescents of color, especially in dealing with White-privileging conditions (Spencer, 2005) and racial issues so fundamental to personal and societal realities. Wynne (2005) wrote counterpoints on education policy regarding the damage of institutional racism on children of color. Her collaborative reform effort in public schools to improve learning environments for economically disenfranchised Black children indicted the inability of the school, rather than the incapacity of the student. She criticized how educators too often allow children from difficult life circumstances to get by with less, under the assumption that the nature of these inner-city children is flawed. Insidious messages about the unworthiness of educating the underachiever and other still perverse consequences of Jim Crow laws need to be confronted: “That consequence on the spiritual lives of the privileged seems today as ignored as the debilitating consequences of racism on the lives of its victims – a systematic reality that ultimately makes us all victims, even though some of us materially benefit from it” (Wynne, 2005, p.64). This active and passive devaluing of people of color is a theme of the Conformity schema; as such policy changes designed to reduce the internalized racism and negative socialization messages is crucial.

Wynne (2005) emphasized that the litany of deficits that people attach to urban students of color – poor neighborhood, lack of appropriate encouragement for schooling from parents, poverty, the negative effect of single-parent homes, etc. – require teachers and administrators to self-examine. Too often, she has heard teachers blaming the low academic achievement of students of color on the plight of their parents, poverty, and the intellectual damage due to

disadvantaged backgrounds. Because education is so steeped in both overt and covert racist belief systems, Wynne proposed the life-long challenge for educators, administrators, counselors, and policymakers to recognize when racist assumptions unfold and take responsibility to initiate conversations about racism. It is only then that a move towards redress can heal the moral deprivation of racism.

Considering the roots of career development in social justice and advocacy for the poor and marginalized groups (Hartung & Blustein, 2002), it is imperative to deal with realities of insufficient educational and economic resources to prevent unconscious socialization (Houser & Overton, 2001). Specific to the significant findings on the predictor variables in this study, practice and policy changes must actively confront inequitable social conditions that contribute to racial oppression. The unjust opportunity structure continues to pose a challenge for the vocational psychology, education, and public policy fields that prepare students for working in the global economy.

### **Future Research: Limitations and Directions**

This study offered some insights into how critical consciousness and racial identity influences the career adaptability of high school students of color. In interpreting the results, I considered differences in this study's findings compared to earlier research conducted with similar samples in an earlier summary of the results. This section will present limitations with the present findings. Although this study uses a model of critical consciousness and racial identity to explain career adaptability, it is notable that other variables can plausibly impact the outcome variables, such as racial socialization (Jernigan, 2009; Nicolas et al., 2008); experience



of racial microaggressions (Sue et al., 2008); effects of race-related stress (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010); stereotype threat (Steele, 1997, 2010); social support from family, teachers, and friends (Kenny & Bledsoe, 2005); one's sense of worth in the family context (Vera et al., 2008); involvement of peers and siblings in career planning (Ali et al., 2005); and other supports for sociopolitical agency in challenging racism, sexism, and social injustice (Diemer et al., 2006).

A number of important methodological issues suggest that the findings reported in this dissertation must be interpreted with care. First, this study proposed an initial exploration of archival data; moreover, the model tested was kept deliberately simple due the availability of completed measures in the archival data set. As such, the statistics may be under-specified. Additionally, some super-ordinate variable may account for the effects noted in both the predictors and outcome variables. For instance, might career outcome expectations and subjective well-being be predicted by socio-economic status? Or might these career adaptability dimensions be accounted for by cognition level of the individual? In this situation, developmental considerations in critical consciousness and racial identity attitudes may vary according to cognition levels of the sample.

Although the students ranged in age from 15.4 to 19.4 with a mean age of 17.7 and age was not a confounding factor according to the preliminary analysis, the within-group cognitive and attitudinal variations of their identity development may have altered the weight of our findings (Erikson, 1959, 1968; Marcia, 1980). Adolescents' ability to abstract about the larger context of adverse circumstances and to make meaning of inequality and disempowerment may be a function of cognitive development. This sample may have been comprised of older

adolescents in the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, but their understanding of their personal identities and awareness of barriers in society may vary and cannot be generalized.

Traditional notions of formal operational reasoning have suggested that the greatest sophistication of objective, scientific reasoning within a logical system was achieved in adolescence (Cartwright, Galupo, Tyree, & Jennings, 2009). With respect to the classical position, Piaget (1972) described how complex thought develops gradually and varies across individuals at a given age. Yet he acknowledged that rather than occurring uniformly in adolescence, cognitive change may continue into adulthood. Recent work in adult development has described mechanisms of advanced cognition in adulthood that add subjective experience such as social, interpersonal, and contextual information to formal, logical reasoning (Cartwright et al., 2009). Perhaps these cognitive development mechanisms affect how adolescents apply particular systems of thought in answering the complex questions of critical consciousness and racial identity asked in this data collection. Recognizing how cognitive development plays a part in lifespan intellectual development is notable as a factor in this present sample's response patterns and as a challenge to all assessment methods.

Future research can disentangle the ways that contextually relevant factors of social hierarchies and race interact with developmental processes by accounting for cognition issues. Specifically, Spencer's (2003, 2005, 2006) body of work can shed light on diverse youths' human growth and psychological processes under difficult conditions utilizing her Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST). PVEST uses theory-driven developmental research with undervalued youths using inclusive and non-stereotypic conceptualizations while acknowledging contextual conditions such as discrimination and

privilege. It is also likely that the relationships can be reciprocal rather than unidirectional, and that these findings, as in all studies, should be considered with awareness of methodological limitations.

Because this is a passive design using self-report instruments, common method variance cannot be ruled out as a potential influence on the results. Lastly, the sample size is modest; as such, future studies with larger, diverse samples will be needed to confirm the findings reported here. Despite these limitations, the current study offers an initial exploration of critical consciousness and racial identity as predictors of career adaptability for urban adolescents of color. The complexity of the challenges that they face and the strengths used may be examined in greater depth through qualitative investigations that allow participants to express how they believe socioracial factors has influenced their career development. Qualitative research can enrich our understanding of their conceptions of working and ways in which these youths have achieved a positive identity and made social contributions that matter to self and society (Hartung, 2008). Longitudinal methods can also assess how these predictors contribute over time to the career adaptability for urban adolescents of color. Further research is critical to consider a multitude of additional variables and hypothesized causal mechanisms in more complex models to offer a better understanding of these processes.

## **Conclusion**

The results of this study offer support for considering selected racial identity statuses as integral parts of counseling interventions to increase career outcome expectations and subjective well-being with urban adolescents of color. Exploratory questions about these strengths'

contributions to career adaptability dimensions were investigated. The Internalization schema was found to be most influential and consistent with previous research on its role in positive youth development (Brookins et al., 1996; Cheatham, 1990; Iwamoto & Liu, 2010; Jackson & Neville, 1998). Additionally, decreased levels of Dissonance and Immersion-Resistance were found to be related to higher levels of satisfaction with school and work. These findings enhance the understanding of adolescents' psychological armor against larger societal inequities and add to the career development literature counteracting the negative portrayal of this group in research. This study provides some initial evidence supporting the necessary preparation of urban students of color for their futures by focusing on their strengths in the face of adversity and promoting racial identity in the school context.

**Appendix A***Demographic Information*

1. What grade are you in?    9        10        11        12

2. What is your birth date?    \_\_\_\_\_  
   Month            Day            Year

3. What is your gender?        Male            Female

4. Select the ethnic group(s) that best describes you. (You may select more than one choice):

\_\_\_ Black, African, African-American

\_\_\_ Hispanic or Latino

\_\_\_ Black, Caribbean (e.g., Haitian, Jamaican)

\_\_\_ Middle Eastern (e.g., Arab,  
                                 Turk,Iranian, Israeli)

\_\_\_ White (non-Hispanic), Anglo,  
                                 Caucasian, European

\_\_\_ Pacific Islander (e.g., Samoan,  
                                 Guamanian)

\_\_\_ American-Indian, Eskimo

\_\_\_ Cape Verdian

\_\_\_ Asian, Asian-American

\_\_\_ Other (please specify):

**Appendix B***Social Dominance Orientation Scale* (SDO; Pratto et al., 1994)

**Which of the following statements do you have positive or negative feelings towards?**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>Very Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Slightly Negative</b>	<b>Neither Positive or Negative</b>	<b>Slightly Positive</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Very Positive</b>
1. Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
2. In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
3. It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
4. To get ahead in life, it is sometimes necessary to step on other groups.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
5. If certain groups stayed in their place, we would have fewer problems.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
6. It's probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top and other groups are at the bottom.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
7. Inferior groups should stay in their place.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
8. Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
9. It would be good if groups could be equal.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
10. Group equality should be our ideal.						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G

**Which of the following statements do you have positive or negative feelings towards?**

Use this same rating scale:

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>Very Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Slightly Negative</b>	<b>Neither Positive or Negative</b>	<b>Slightly Positive</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Very Positive</b>

11. All groups should be given an equal chance in life.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

12. We should do what we can to equalize conditions for different groups.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

13. Increased social equality.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

14. We would have fewer problems if we treated people more equally.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

15. We should strive to make incomes as equal as possible.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

16. No one group should dominate in society.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

### Appendix C

*Person of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (PRIAS; Helms, 1995b)*

**Instructions:** This questionnaire is designed to measure people's social and political attitudes concerning race and ethnicity. Since different people have different opinions, there are no right or wrong answers. Use the scale below to respond to each statement according to the way you see things. Be as honest as you can. Beside each item number, choose the letter that best describes how you feel and fill in one circle on the bubble sheet.

1. In general, I believe that Whites are superior to other racial groups.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

2. I feel more comfortable being around Whites than I do being around people of my own race.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

3. In general, people of my race have not contributed very much to White society.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

4. I am embarrassed to be the race I am.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

5. I would have accomplished more in life if I had been born White.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

6. Whites are more attractive than people of my race.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

7. People of my race should learn to think and act like Whites.



<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

8. I limit myself to White Activities.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

9. I think racial minorities blame Whites too much for their problems.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

10. I feel unable to involve myself in Whites' experiences, and am increasing my involvement in experiences involving people of my race.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

11. When I think about how Whites have treated people of my race, I feel an overwhelming anger.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

12. I want to know more about my culture.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

13. I limit myself to activities involving people of my own race.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

14. Most Whites are untrustworthy.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

15. White society would be better off if it were based on cultural values of my people.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
----------	----------	----------	----------	----------

**Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Uncertain            Agree            Strongly Agree**

16. I am determined to find my cultural identity.

**A                                  B                                  C                                  D                                  E**  
**Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Uncertain            Agree            Strongly Agree**

17. Most Whites are insensitive.

**A                                  B                                  C                                  D                                  E**  
**Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Uncertain            Agree            Strongly Agree**

18. I reject all White values.

**A                                  B                                  C                                  D                                  E**  
**Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Uncertain            Agree            Strongly Agree**

19. My most important goal in life it to fight the oppression of my people.

**A                                  B                                  C                                  D                                  E**  
**Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Uncertain            Agree            Strongly Agree**

20. I believe that being from my cultural background has caused me to have many strengths.

**A                                  B                                  C                                  D                                  E**  
**Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Uncertain            Agree            Strongly Agree**

21. I am comfortable with people regardless of their race.

**A                                  B                                  C                                  D                                  E**  
**Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Uncertain            Agree            Strongly Agree**

22. People, regardless of their race, have strengths and limitations.

**A                                  B                                  C                                  D                                  E**  
**Strongly Disagree    Disagree            Uncertain            Agree            Strongly Agree**

23. I think people of my culture and White culture differ from each other in some ways, but neither groups is superior.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

24. My cultural background is a source of pride for me.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

25. People of my culture and White culture have much to learn from each other.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

26. Whites have some customs that I enjoy.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

27. I enjoy being around people regardless of their race.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

28. Every racial group has some good people and some bad people.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

29. Minorities should not blame Whites for all of their social problems.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

30. I do not understand why Whites treat minorities as they do.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

31. I am embarrassed about some of the things I feel about my people.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

32. I am not sure where I really belong.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

33. I have begun to question my beliefs.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

34. Maybe I can learn something from people of my race.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

35. White people can teach me more about surviving in this world than people of my own race, but people of my race can teach me more about being human.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

36. I don't know whether being the race I am is an asset or a deficit.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

37. Sometimes I think Whites are superior and sometimes I think they're inferior to people of my race.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

38. Sometimes I am proud of the racial group to which I belong and sometimes I am ashamed of it.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

39. Thinking about my values and beliefs takes up a lot of time.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

40. I'm not sure how I feel about myself.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

41. White people are difficult to understand.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

42. I find myself replacing old friends with new ones who are from my culture.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

43. I feel anxious about some of the things I feel about people of my race.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

44. When someone of my race does something embarrassing in public, I feel embarrassed.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

45. When both White people and people of my race are present in a social situation, I prefer to be with my own racial group.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

46. My values and beliefs match those of Whites more than they do people of my race.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

47. The way Whites treat people of my race makes me angry.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
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**Strongly Disagree      Disagree                  Uncertain                  Agree                  Strongly Agree**

48. I only follow the traditions and customs of people of my racial group.

A	B	C	D	E
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

49. When people of my race act like Whites I feel angry.

A	B	C	D	E
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

50. I am comfortable being the race I am.

A	B	C	D	E
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

**Appendix D**

*Career Outcome Expectations* (OES; McWhirter, Rasheed, & Crothers, 2000)

**Please respond to these questions by filling in a letter from “A” (strongly disagree) to “D” (strongly agree).**

1. My career planning will lead to a satisfying career for me.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

2. I will be successful in my chosen career/occupation.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

3. The future looks bright for me.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

4. My talents and skills will be used in my career/occupation.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

5. I have control over my career decisions.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

6. I can make my future a happy one.

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>

**Appendix E**

*Satisfaction with Career and Academic Preferences questionnaire*  
(SATCAP; DeMania, 1999)

**For the items that follow, please indicate the appropriate letter using the scale below that most accurately reflects your opinion in response to each statement.**

A	B	C	D	E
<hr/>				
Never true About me	Usually not true about me	No Opinion Not sure	Usually true about me	Always true about me

1. I am satisfied with my current career plans, regardless of how vague or specific they might be.

A                      B                      C                      D                      E

2. My current situation in school and/or work fits in well with my desired career goals.

A                      B                      C                      D                      E

3. I am not satisfied with my present position in school and/or work.

A                      B                      C                      D                      E

4. I feel more satisfied NOW with my school and/or work situation compared with how I have felt in the past.

A                      B                      C                      D                      E

5. I do not feel hopeful about achieving my academic and career goals.

A                      B                      C                      D                      E

6. I feel good about the way in which I have made my decisions about school and work.

A                      B                      C                      D                      E

7. I feel satisfied with the progress I have made toward my goals.

A                      B                      C                      D                      E

8. I feel that my high school prepared me to reach my goals.

A                      B                      C                      D                      E



A	B	C	D	E
Never true About me	Usually not true about me	No Opinion Not sure	Usually true about me	Always true about me

9. I am delighted with the present direction of my career plans, regardless of how vague or specific they might be.

A B C D E

10. I am satisfied with the way in which I have made my decisions about the options available to me in school and/or work.

A B C D E

11. I feel less satisfied NOW with my school and/or work situation compared with how I have felt in the past.

A B C D E

12. I feel good about the educational and career choices available to me.

A B C D E

13. I am satisfied with the options available to me in school and/or work.

A B C D E

14. I feel uneasy about the way in which I have made my decisions about the options available to me in school and/or work.

A B C D E

15. I am not satisfied with my current career plans, regardless of how vague or specific they might be.

A B C D E

16. I am satisfied with my current thoughts about my educational and career possibilities.

A B C D E

17. I feel good about where I am in my education and career.

A B C D E

18. I am optimistic about my career plans, regardless of how vague or specific they might be.

A B C D E

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